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**LIFE OF TURNER ASHBY**









*Yours truly  
James Ashby*

**Frontispiece**

# *Life of Turner Ashby*

BY

THOMAS A. ASHBY, M.D. LL.D.

*His kinsman; author, "The Valley Campaigns,"  
published by this house, and of  
other books*



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TO  
THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE ASHBY (LAUREL)  
BRIGADE AND TO  
COLONEL R. P. CHEW  
AND THE MEN OF CHEW'S BATTERY,—WHO MADE ASHBY'S  
FAME POSSIBLE,—THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR



## PREFACE

Of the many distinguished men that fought in the Confederate army there were few who had so short and so brilliant a career as Turner Ashby.

Having entered the service of Virginia on the 19th day of April, 1861, as captain of a company of cavalry, Ashby soon rose by rapid promotion to the rank of brigadier-general, being in command of all the cavalry in the Army of the Valley at the time of his death, June 6, 1862. Thus in a period of less than fourteen months he had reached a post of distinction that has given him a noteworthy place in the history of his State, and has established his fame as one of the heroic characters of the age in which he lived.

At the time of his death few men in either army had attracted more notice in poetry and prose than had Turner Ashby. His manly character and heroic deeds, his knightly bearing and chivalric courage, surrounded his exploits with a halo of romance and aroused an admiration that few men have ever excited. In his spirit and type he represented the heroic age of the Civil War, and in his personal daring and dashing leadership he ex-

emplified methods of warfare that have always attracted the notice of mankind; and short as was his career, his name will long live among the brilliant and picturesque characters that have surrounded war with its romance and heroism.

In the preparation of this history of the life of Turner Ashby the author has tried to give a correct picture of the man and the soldier. Having drawn his information from different sources, he wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the various historians of the Civil War who have written of Ashby. In 1867, the Rev. Jas. B. Avirett,—who was the Chaplain of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, and who was intimately associated with Ashby during his entire military career,—wrote the “Memoirs of General Turner Ashby and his Compeers,” a book that has long been out of print. It was at the earnest solicitation of Dr. Avirett that the author was induced to prepare the present “Life of Ashby.”

Dr. Avirett was for some years previous to his death in such poor health that he felt unable to revise the first edition of his book, and he repeatedly urged the author to bring out a new “Life of Ashby.” The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Avirett, not only for much of the material here used, but for the inspiration

that has prompted the preparation of this book.

The author wishes also to acknowledge his indebtedness to the writings of the late John Esten Cooke and to those of the late Clarence Thomas,—who have both written excellent memoirs of Ashby and his men,—as well as to express his indebtedness to the numerous biographers of Stonewall Jackson for valuable information. Having had the privilege of knowing intimately a number of gallant men who were members of the Ashby (Laurel) Brigade during the entire Civil War, and who had served under Ashby and his successors until the surrender at Appomattox Court House, and having had the advantage of knowing many of Ashby's intimate friends and relatives, the author has been able to treat of the personal side of his life.

In placing "The Life of Turner Ashby" before the reader of the present generation, the author hopes he has presented a type of character that will always live in this nation,—a type that will always inspire men to give up their lives in defense of honor and duty.

Baltimore, January 19, 1914.







and physical equipment. Destiny is the climax of a man's antecedents, the resultant of his environment; for no man has ever sprung with one leap from the primitive to matured development. As some one has said: "The source of genius is often in ancestry, and the blood of descent is sometimes the prophecy of destiny."

The laws of organic life obey established causes. The forces of selection,—both natural and sexual,—build up or tear down all organic structures. Development is the product of these forces. Status or death are the outworn fabrics of abnormal function. In the study of the life of any man who impresses his character upon the notice of his fellow man the influences that have contributed to his development should be reckoned among the assets that make up his working capital. What has heredity done for the man, and what has environment done? Is he an accident of fortune, an upheaval through some catastrophe of nature? What were the determining influences that brought out the power hitherto unrecognized in him? These questions should interest every student of character and of action in his estimate of the man whose life's work is presented by his biographer. To trace the individual back to his antecedents is the duty of his biographer. He should

show whence the man came and by what influences he has reached the position that entitles him to a place in history. Heredity and environment are the keystone of his character and achievements. Without the support of these fundamental elements, no man can rise above the level of ordinary attainment.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY NAME

**T**HE origin of his family name should be a most interesting study to every man who values his own character.

The family name itself is simply a mark of identification. Through generations of use it gives title to an established lineage. The older and clearer the title, the greater the pride of ownership. This hereditary title of ownership has been the pride of kings, of rulers, of houses of royal descent.

The people of Israel, of the seed of Abraham, rejoice in the inheritance of the Patriarch's blood. The Cæsars, the Guelphs, the Hohenzollerns, and the Romanoffs find just cause for pride in the long line of descent that has handed down these names to the present generation.

Among the less exalted, as among the families of royal birth, pride of inheritance is a badge of honor,—a token that ennobles its possessor when worn with distinction. It confers little advantage upon a weak character and a useless life, nor can it kindle enthusiasm in a mind which views the

duties of life from a low and narrow point of view; but it arouses a brave and loyal spirit in one who aims to excel.

Of all the motives that go to the development of character probably the highest is to hold a good name among men, and to hand down this name to posterity. To confer this name upon the geographical map of the world, upon its most benevolent institutions, or upon the pages of history has aroused the inspiration, the heroism, and the untiring labor of many of the world's most renowned characters.

With Turner Ashby, the subject of this book, pride of name and of inheritance were determining influences in the development of his character and in the noble bent of his mind. The spirit of chivalry and fire of heroism were born in him, just as the love of military adventure and his devotion to his native State were hereditary gifts. He was no more responsible for these characteristics than for his dark complexion and the raven color of his hair. Four generations of his ancestors in Virginia had held military commissions,—in the Colonial Wars, the Revolutionary Wars, and in the War of 1812. The military services of his people, their heroic deeds, and his environment from birth all fostered in him a deep love of

adventure and a profound patriotism. His antecedents directed his spirit and purpose. Only the opportunity was wanted to bring out the fervor and fire latent in his heroic nature.

The ancestors of Turner Ashby came to Virginia during the Cromwellian period; for, being adherents of the Crown, they had left England after the execution of Charles I. Family tradition and numerous facts trace the Virginia Ashbys back to the old English branch, which assumed the name of Ashby soon after the Norman conquest. The ancient Norman family of La Zouche settled in England near the town of Ashby, Leicestershire, and gave to the town the name of Ashby de la Zouche. The word Ashby is a combination of the Saxon "Ash" and the Danish "Bye," meaning "town," which, when translated into modern English, becomes either Ashby or Ashtown.

The place origin of the name is somewhat contradicted by the older records, which mention the fact that the ancient castle of Ashby in Leicestershire,—now standing in modern reconstruction,—is referred to first as Assebi in the time of Edward the Confessor. At the time of the Domesday survey, this castle was held under the Countess Judith, to whom it was presented by her uncle William the Conqueror. Various lords succeeded

Hugh as lord of the manor of Assebi, or Essebi, but no regular order of succession can be traced until the reign of Henry III, when David of Assebi became lord of the manor.

In the century after David's rule these lands came into the hands of the Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, and took the name of Castle Ashby, but the name of Ashby David continued to be used for many years.

The present English family traces its origin to Richard de Ashby, who in 1296 was lord of the manors of Quenby and South Croxton in Leicestershire. For over 600 years the Ashby family in England has had many distinguished members who attained positions of honor and distinction in English literature, politics, and military and naval service.

American branches of the Ashby family were to be found in Virginia as early as 1635, in Maryland in 1650, and in Massachusetts in 1640. Turner Ashby is the fifth in line of descent from Capt. Thomas Ashby, who located near Paris, Fauquier County, Va., between 1700 and 1710. Captain Ashby was engaged in the Colonial service of Virginia, defending the early settlers against Indian raids and depredations; and when not fighting the red man was busy accumulating lands and



other property. In his will, admitted to record in Winchester, Va., in 1752, he divided a large estate among the following sons and daughters: (1) John, (2) Robert, (3) Stephen, (4) Thomas, (5) Henry, (6) Benjamin, (7) Elizabeth,—who married Hardin,—(8) Sarah, (9) Rose, and (10) Ann.

John Ashby, the oldest son of Capt. Thomas Ashby, was born in 1707 in what is now Fauquier County, Va. His early life and manhood were spent on his father's farm, which was at that time on the borderland of civilized life in Virginia.

We have reason to believe that Capt. Thomas Ashby was attracted to this new and then wild country by the fertility of the soil, the natural beauty of the location, and by his love of adventure and pioneer life. His English ancestry had developed in his character that strong passion for outdoor life and hardy pursuits,—tastes that have made the English race the great pioneers and colonizers of the world, and the foremost people in the development of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Ever pushing to the frontier, they have laid the foundation of the Nation's growth in the primeval forest, and have paved the way for the onward march of civilized life.

At the time of John Ashby's birth this section of Virginia was sparsely settled. The Indian had not been banished from the soil but still disputed its settlement with the paleface. Churches, schools, and civil government were scarcely organized except in remote places. The early settler was deprived of those advantages which only follow in the path of established settlements. The young men of that period enjoyed the most limited advantages of education and of social intercourse; but they were trained in the school of endurance and adventure. They were early taught to ride, to shoot, to speak the truth, and to respect woman. Those habits of life that developed courage, independence, manliness, and character were grounded into them from early youth; and it is to this Spartan-like training of the youth of that period that we owe the growth of this nation in civic virtue, in patriotism, and in religious toleration. While natural talent was deprived of intellectual training, it was strengthened in sound judgment and practical wisdom. The men of that period were men of ideas rather than of scholastic education; and in the morals and virtues that enoble human nature they deserve to rank among the best men of their generation. John Ashby grew up in this frontier settlement of Virginia, and

he had not reached his majority before he was called upon to defend his native home against numerous Indian raids, which were made into that section of Piedmont, Virginia.

He first comes into notice when, as a mere youth, he gave his name to Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains, through which the early settlers crossed over from the Piedmont section into the Shenandoah Valley. He has the credit of being the first white man to have piloted a wagon through this gap, and an accident that happened to him on this trip, because of his failure to lock the wheel of his wagon, is said to have given his name to the gap.

The story goes that it was the custom in those days in going down a steep incline to cut down a tree and attach it to the wagon to hold it in check, for the wagon chain was not then in general use. John Ashby failed to take this precaution, and when the wagon in its descent ran over the horses and spilled the load on the ground, making a bad mix-up, he was asked why he had not locked the wheels, his reply was: "Damn a pair of horses that can't outrun a wagon." Whether because of this circumstance or from some other cause this gap has borne the name of Ashby for more than 175 years; and there are few mountain passes in Vir-

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ginia, or anywhere else in this country, more widely known or more noted in history.


John Ashby was one of the first settlers to move his residence over into the Valley, then inhabited by Indians. His home was on the west bank of the Shenandoah River where the first ferry, bearing his name, was kept for the conveyance of travelers across the river. This ferry,—in more recent years known as Berry's Ferry,—is on the direct route from the Shenandoah Valley to Piedmont, Virginia, through Ashby's Gap. George Washington in his diary, "A Journey Across the Mountains," mentions the fact that he had spent a night at the home of John Ashby at the time that at the early age of nineteen he went over into the Valley to survey the lands for Lord Fairfax.

Once settled in the Shenandoah Valley, John Ashby became one of the noted men of that section. As the population increased,—because of the number of people who came down into the Valley from Maryland and Pennsylvania and who crossed over the Blue Ridge from eastern Virginia,—this region soon became one of the most prosperous and progressive sections of the State.

By inheritance Lord Thomas Fairfax, Baron of Cameron (of the Scottish nobility), became the proprietary owner of all the lands between the

headwaters of the Potomac River and the Rappahannock. He was an eccentric old bachelor, and about 1749 took up his residence at Greenway Court, in what is now Clarke County. Here he maintained a baronial estate; and in order to encourage a settlement of his lands by many of the oldest and best of the Colonial families of eastern Virginia, he deeded for nominal sums, or leased in perpetuity, large tracts of land to all who would become his neighbors. The fertility of the soil and the beauty of the landscape led to an early settlement and rapid development.

Soon after Lord Fairfax took up his residence in the Valley the people became greatly distressed by Indian raids and massacres. Great Britain and France were at that time at war, and the French settlements in Canada and in the Northwest had aroused the Indians against the English colonies. It was at this period that John Ashby came into public notice. He was selected by his neighbors as captain of a company, known as the Second Virginia Rangers,—a company that from 1752 to 1754 was located at Fort Ashby, the present site of Frankfort, at the confluence of Patterson Creek and the Potomac River. During his stay at this fort Capt. John Ashby became an experienced and noted Indian fighter, and by tradition his many



daring exploits and narrow escapes have been handed down to the present generation.

During the Braddock campaign his company was made the advance-guard of the expedition; and it is stated that he had warned General Braddock against his methods of advance and attack, which warnings were disregarded by the general, who undertook to fight English regulars according to Continental methods, with the result that his forces were ambushed and destroyed by the Indians and the French troops. Captain Ashby was selected by Washington to convey the intelligence of Braddock's defeat to the governor at Williamsburg. He made the journey to Williamsburg and back with such amazing rapidity that the feat was considered a remarkable evidence of endurance, courage, and horsemanship. His services in the Indian wars were so conspicuous that it has been claimed that he did for the people of the Valley a service as notable as that that Cresap did in what is now West Virginia, or that Daniel Boone did in Kentucky. His energy, activity, and daring courage were in his day the talk of the fire-side. He is said to have had the eye of the eagle, the courage of the lion, the agility of the panther, and that he knew neither the sense of fear nor the sensation of pain.

In the Braddock campaign Daniel Morgan, the hero of Cowpens, was a teamster in the company of John Ashby. For some breach of orders Morgan was tried and condemned to be whipped by the British officer in command, the sentence being that he should receive five hundred lashes. When he had received four hundred and ninety-nine John Ashby heard of the punishment and interfered, stating that it was a crime to humiliate such a man as Morgan. Morgan escaped with the four hundred and ninety-nine lashes, and subsequently boasted that he cheated the British out of one lash, but that during the War of the Revolution he had got even with them.

In 1774, John Ashby, with three companions, went to Kentucky to locate lands that had been granted by the Colony of Virginia for services in the Indian wars. He spent two years going over the country and locating these lands, during which time he was with Daniel Boone in some of his warfare with the Indians. Ashby located large sections in the blue-grass region and along the Ohio River, and these sections are said to have been the best land in Kentucky. The author has in his possession a copy of a deed for a grant of two thousand acres, located on the Lexington and Versailles Pike, twelve miles west of Lexington,—which re-

cites that in consideration of military services rendered the Colony of Virginia by John Ashby in the Indian wars that took place, prior to the treaty of peace between Great Britain and France in 1764, there "is granted two thousand acres in the County of Kentucky, State of Virginia."

The boundaries of the land are then given and the deed is signed by Thomas Jefferson, Governor of Virginia, "in the fourth year of the Commonwealth." This land,—which is said to-day to be the best body of land in the State,—was held by John Ashby's descendants until within recent years. John Ashby also located a large tract of land in the Green River section,—a tract that was handed down to his heirs through four generations. The father of the writer, being a great-grandson of John Ashby, inherited a portion of this land, which he sold in 1867; and the writer enjoys the distinction of having been educated largely on the proceeds of the sale of land which was earned by his great-great-grandfather in the Colonial wars of Virginia.

After spending two years in Kentucky John Ashby was forced to return home by the way of the Ohio River and the Mississippi. He and two companions floated down the rivers in dugouts as far as New Orleans, having numerous experiences



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and undergoing many dangers along the route. One of the companions died on journey down the Mississippi, and was buried in the river opposite what is now the city of Memphis. The second companion died at Savannah. John Ashby returned by sailboat from Savannah to Fredericksburg, from which point he reached home after an absence of over two years. He was at that time sixty-nine years old and still in vigorous health. He died in 1797 at the age of ninety years.

The writer has given these details of the life of John Ashby because he believes they had a large influence over the development of the military spirit of Turner Ashby, who was fully acquainted with his ancestor's life and exploits. Indeed, Turner more closely resembled the old Indian fighter in his physical and mental make-up than did any member of his family, and had more of his characteristics,—his energy, daring, love of adventure, and military spirit.

John Ashby II, the grandfather of Turner Ashby, held a commission as captain in the Third Virginia Regiment, commanded by Col. Thomas Marshall, the father of Chief Justice John Marshall, and served with honor during the War of the Revolution. He married Mary Tur-

ner, and became the father of a large family. His son, Col. Turner Ashby,—the father of Gen. Turner Ashby,—who held a commission in the War of 1812, was a man of high character and distinction in the locality in which he lived. Col. Turner Ashby married Dorothea Green, of Culpeper County, a lady of strong intelligence and firm character. She had the dark complexion of the Greenes, and her son Turner inherited his dark complexion and raven black hair from his mother. Col. Turner Ashby died when his son Turner was only six years of age, leaving a family of three sons and three daughters,—all of tender age. Turner was the third child and second son.

The death of his father was a great blow to his mother, who was left with a family of six children, the oldest, Elizabeth, being not twelve years of age, and the youngest, Dorothea F., an infant.

Mrs. Ashby, a woman of strong sense and cultivated mind, possessed those qualities of heart and character which eminently fitted her for the duties and responsibilities of motherhood. With a family of six small children, deprived of the care and protection of a father she was both mother and father to her boys and girls, and surrounded them with the refinements and comforts of a country home that was located in one of the most pictur-

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esque sections of Virginia. This home of the Ashby family, Rose Bank, was a large colonial house situated on a hill which commanded a wide view of the surrounding mountains. Goose Creek flowed in front of the yard, which was filled with native oaks and evergreen, while flowers and running vines added to the attractiveness of the lawn. Mrs. Ashby was a lover of music and song, of books and flowers, of social life and hospitality. She surrounded her little family with all the advantages of the day, employing the best of tutors in her home, and looking after the education of the children with devotion and intelligent care. Her children grew up in this atmosphere of refinement and moral discipline, and early acquired those lessons that fitted them for the best duties of citizenship and useful life. There was a strong devotion between the mother and children, and few families lived more happily than Mrs. Ashby and her orphans. Her boys grew to be manly men, and her daughters married into the best families of the State. Mrs. Ashby lived to see her three boys distinguished in the service of Virginia, and to see two give up their young lives in battle. Her oldest son, James, was a captain of a company that was raised in Stafford County just before the beginning of the war. He died in February,

1861, from pulmonary disease. Turner, her second son,—the subject of this sketch,—and Richard, her youngest boy, were killed in battle after they had placed their names on the pages of the history of their State.<sup>1</sup>

There were few families in the South that have contributed so much to the glory of their State as the family of this noble woman, who, with the virtue of the Spartan mother, taught her boys to love the truth, to fear God, and to serve their fellow man. This family, brought up by a mother's gentle influence, developed exceptional traits of lofty character and of heroic spirit. The boys were manly fellows, and were raised to view life from the standpoint of the highest citizenship. They were amiable, gentle, and unselfish in disposition, yet were fearless and daring in spirit, and

<sup>1</sup> Col. Henry Marshall Ashby, an own cousin of Turner Ashby, was born in Fauquier County, Va., in 1840. At the age of twenty-one he moved to Knoxville, Tenn., where he was engaged in business at the outbreak of the war. He was elected captain of a company of Cavalry and entered the Western army; where he was soon promoted to the rank of Colonel of the Second Tennessee Cavalry, and by gallant service rose to the command of a brigade of cavalry. At the close of the Civil War he was in command of a division and surrendered with General Johnston in North Carolina. He was only twenty-five years of age at the time of the surrender and had gone through the four years of war with only one wound. He was as well known in the Western army as was his cousin Turner in Virginia. Like Turner, he was a distinguished rider and romantic character. He was killed in Knoxville in 1868.

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devoted to the sports and pleasures of rural life. They were fond of the horse and of the dog, of the gun and of the chase, and excelled in those bodily exercises that make the strong and vigorous man.

## CHAPTER III

### BIRTH AND EDUCATION

**T**URNER ASHBY,—the second son of Colonel Turner and Dorothea Green Ashby,—was born at Rose Bank on the 23d of October, 1828. He was brought up and educated in the old family home and spent his entire life,—until he entered the Confederate army,—in the locality where he was born. His first instruction from books was given by private tutors in his own home, and he was later educated in a school taught by a Mr. Ambler, a neighbor. His education was such as was usually received by the boys of his locality; for at that time few young men in that section of Virginia received a collegiate education. He was taught the fundamental branches of knowledge, and knew how to read, write, spell, and do the necessary problems in arithmetic. He did not possess high scholarship, but learned the more practical things,—things that made for intelligent thought and manly character, for habits of industry and honorable dealing with his fellow man.

What Turner Ashby lacked in scholastic train-

ing he more than made up for in hard sense, sound judgment, and intelligent ideas. He was by nature reticent, modest, gentle, and unassuming; yet, with these qualities of mind, he was a natural leader, and as a mere boy led his companions in all the sports of the chase and in the social life of the neighborhood. For when aroused to action there was that spirit of life and fire in his disposition that led others to follow where he dared to lead.

As a boy he was small of stature for his age and somewhat delicate in his health, but as he grew to manhood, he overcame these defects by his outdoor life and training, by his love of horseback riding, and by the exercises of the rural life by which he was surrounded. As a small boy he became an expert rider and trainer of young horses, and was known as the most daring and graceful horseman of his section. After reaching adult life he engaged in mercantile business near his home, but continued his interest in the farm and in the outdoor sports of the community, which was noted for its gay social life and generous hospitality.

The influences that determine the habits and character of the man can be traced to different sources, but perhaps none has so much to do with the making of the individual as has environment. In this respect Turner Ashby's surroundings were

most favorable for the development of his strong hereditary characteristics. The section of Virginia in which he was born and raised was noted for great natural beauty, for richness of soil, for purity of water and healthfulness of climate. The foot-hills of the Blue Ridge surrounded his home on every side and were broken by picturesque valleys, which made the landscape one of mountain and vale, of open field and native forest, inhabited by a strong and hearty race of cultured and refined people,—a people who followed the simple life of agriculture in the most independent way.

The rich farm lands were given up to the raising of wheat, corn, oats and rye, while the rougher lands afforded pasture for cattle, sheep, and the raising of the best breeds of the horse.

The farms were large and the settlement was not crowded. The people were the descendants of the best of the old colonial families who had moved up from the tidewater section of the State more than a century before, and had taken up these rich lands, on which they had built their homes, which were modeled after the old colonial houses in eastern Virginia. The friends and neighbors of Turner Ashby were the Marshalls, Striblings, Amblers, Paynes, Hatchers, Dulanys, and many other old Virginia families. These people repre-



sented the best blood of the State, and they gave to the settlement a character and culture not found in many rural countries. The counties of Fauquier and Loudon,—which have produced many of the most distinguished sons of the Old Dominion,—were at that time, as they are to-day, the leading agricultural counties of Virginia.

The associations of Turner Ashby's boyhood and early manhood were with these people. They were his dearest and most intimate friends and companions in the social life as well as in the sports that were practiced in that section of Virginia. These families were a God-fearing but fun-loving class, strict in their religious duties, but at all times ready for the fox hunt, the tournament, and the dance. These lighter pleasures were not considered inappropriate to the enjoyment of youth nor detrimental to the development of manliness and uprightness of character. There was no puritanism in the spirit of these young people, but a profound respect for chivalry and purity of life. The customs and practices of these people invested woman with a respect and deference that added to the charm and loveliness of womanhood. This spirit of chivalry was kept alive by the outdoor life and by the practices of the tournament,—a sport that had come down

to these Virginians from their forefathers in England. It is probable that no social custom had more to do with the purity and manliness of the Southern boy and with the grace and loveliness of the Southern girl than the old-time tournament in Virginia. It developed the grace, the skill, and the daring spirit of the rider, as well as the heroic nature of the man.

In the exercises of the tournament Turner Ashby stands out as the most distinguished of his associates. He rode at the ring, with a dash and fire that few young men have ever possessed. It was his annual custom for a number of years to ride at the tournaments held at Warrenton Springs, at Capon Springs, and in his own locality. In these contests he usually took as a title the name of Knight of the Black Prince, or Knight of Hiawatha; and in his costume and make-up he assumed the appearance of the Indian warrior. His dark complexion and raven black hair added to the appropriateness of the character he assumed. He most frequently rode a horse without bridle or saddle,—one that he had trained to follow the path, without the guide of the bit.

There was perhaps no young man in Virginia of his generation who crowned as many women Queen of Love and Beauty as did Turner Ashby; for it

was seldom that he failed to carry off the first honors of the tournament or failed to add to its excitement and picturesqueness. His superb management of his horse, his daring feats, and his grace were the marvel of his day. Turner Ashby and his horse were inseparable companions. He loved this noble animal, and few men have ever had such a dominion over the spirit and pride of the horse as had he. During the war he rode the two best horses in the army, and his feats of horsemanship with the two animals were the admiration of the entire army.

As Turner Ashby grew to manhood financial clouds began to gather around his old home at Rose Bank, and his mother had to spend much of her fortune in rearing and educating her children until, in 1853, it became necessary for her to sell her old home. Two of her daughters had married into the family of the Moncures, and were living in Stafford County, and her oldest son, James, had also married a Miss Moncure and he too was living in Stafford. Having decided to live with one of her daughters, she removed to Stafford, where Richard, her youngest son, followed her, and for a short time he farmed there. He subsequently went West, and lived on the frontier until the breaking out of the war, when he returned to Fau-

quier and became first lieutenant of the company commanded by his brother, Turner. When Turner was promoted, Richard became captain of the company.

After his mother sold the old home Turner purchased a farm within sight of Rose Bank. He named the place,—which was located on a high hill overlooking the mountains and valleys around Markham,—Wolfe's Craig. Here he lived a bachelor until the breaking out of the war, when he left, never returning to Wolfe's Craig after entering the army. He was so deeply attached to the country and people of Fauquier County that he was never willing to change his place of residence. His local attachments were so strong and his habits of life were so fixed that they held him bound to his childhood scenes until called to go with his company to the seat of war in April, 1861.

About 1855-6 a railroad was constructed across the Blue Ridge. This road ran from Manassas to Strasburg, and passed within one hundred yards of Rose Bank, now owned by Mr. Edward Marshall, son of Chief Justice John Marshall. Mr. Marshall was president of the road. During its construction a large number of laborers were employed, and these men became very troublesome to the citizens. To hold the laborers in check

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Turner Ashby organized a small cavalry company, made up of the young men around Markham,—the name given by Mr. Marshall to Rose Bank and to the railroad station close by. After the completion of the railroad this company was still kept in organization, and its size was increased by the enlistment of new men. Turner Ashby took great pride in the company, and his gift of leadership was fully shown by the subsequent work of his company in the John Brown Raid and during the Civil War.

After Turner's old home had been broken up by the removal of his mother to Stafford County he engaged in mercantile business at Markham and also conducted his farm at Wolfe's Craig. As he had no family, he lived the simple life of the Virginia gentleman of his day, and enjoyed the social customs of his community. I remember having seen him once at Markham with my father, when I was a boy of nine years of age. He was then a young man and wore only a mustache. He subsequently grew the long and flowing beard that gave him his later characteristics.

During the years that immediately preceded the war Turner Ashby was interested in the politics of the time and ran for the State legislature, but as he belonged to the Whig party he was not

elected. In his political affiliations he was a follower of Henry Clay. He was opposed to the war until the John Brown Raid, and made the statement that the war actually began with this insurrection. Like many of the people of his section he was a slaveowner, but he would have willingly liberated his negroes, if that act would have prevented war.


Turner Ashby was the social leader of his community,—a section of the State where the social life of the people was noted for a refinement, hospitality, and high breeding not excelled in any part of the South. Though retiring, gentle, and unassuming in his manners his courage, skillful horsemanship, generous hospitality, love of outdoor life, and chivalric spirit drew to him the affection and esteem of his associates and surrounded him with hosts of friends, who willingly followed his leadership. Few young men have been able to hold a position in a community such as he held, or to draw together so many daring spirits as followed him both before and during the war. When any social gathering was held,—such as following the fox, cross-country rides, tournament, or dance,—Turner Ashby was always on hand,—the leading spirit in all these pleasurable pastimes.

The country around Markham was peculiarly

adapted to outdoor sport and joyful life. The land rolled away in mountains, hills, and valleys, where the wild turkey, partridge, pheasant, and other game were to be found in great abundance, while the fox found protection in the hills and mountains, and was always present to invite the following of the hounds.

These outdoor sports had much to do with the habits and customs of the people, who by the exercise of the horse and the use of the gun cultivated a love of daring adventure. Then, too, they gave an athletic training, which added health and vigor to body and spirit and developed that heroism that made these men of Fauquier so conspicuous in the Civil War.

In this atmosphere Turner was insensibly laying the foundation for the military career that was to be his later in life. While a man of peace, he had all the instincts of the soldier and loved military life, as was shown by the interest he took in the company of cavalry that he organized and commanded before the war merely for temporary necessity. When the necessity ceased to exist he did not disband the company but, to the contrary, strengthened its numbers and improved its discipline. He seems thus early to have had a vision of the coming war and to have been making prepa-



rations for it; for there were perhaps few rural communities in the South where a volunteer cavalry company was in active organization.

The membership of this company was drawn from a large rural district and the men had to come long distances in order to attend the exercises and drills. No one but a man of Turner Ashby's spirit and with his love of military life could have held these men together in times of peace. The men of whom the company was composed all owned their horses and were the sons of the best citizens of that section. The love of the chase and of the tournament had, no doubt, much to do with their military spirit, for this love gave a common interest and encouraged horseback exercises among the youth of that rural section. When the members of the company were not assembled for drill many of them met in the fox-hunt and in the tournament exercises held during the summer months. Then, too, the social instincts of these men found gratification in a military organization composed of those of their own class, which brought them together more frequently than would otherwise have been the case.

While Turner Ashby was amusing himself with his company of cavalry and learning the art of war he was not neglectful of his civil duties. He



took an active interest in local, State, and National politics. Though in no sense a political leader, he was informed on all questions that had a bearing on his duties as a citizen. He was in affiliation with the Whig party from pure conviction, for this party was largely in the minority in his county, and many of his closest friends were Democrats. He believed in the general principles of democracy, but held that an unbridled democracy was prejudicial to the best interest of society. He did not believe in universal suffrage, because he held that all men could not be trusted with the right to vote and that the masses were largely controlled by politicians and demagogues, who used the ignorant voter for their own purposes. He was far from being a Federalist, for he held tenaciously to the doctrine of States Rights as defined by the Constitution. He loved his native State of Virginia with all his devotion and loyalty. He believed in her institutions and laws and centered all his pride on her achievements in history.

Like the people of his section, he held that the institution of slavery had been of great advantage to the negro race, and seeing as he did the domestic life of the slave, he believed the negro was better cared for, better fed, better clothed, and better looked after than any other laborer. He

contrasted the condition of the negro servant in his community with that of the white laborer in the North, and he came to the conclusion that the advantage was with the negro. He was wise enough to know that the institution of slavery was in growing disfavor and that the sentiments of civilization were against it; but he believed, as did many of his neighbors, that the time had not come for a general emancipation, and he repudiated the false sentiments and violent measures of the antislavery party in the North. At that time, had it been put to a vote of the people of the Piedmont and Valley counties of Virginia to pass a law providing for some gradual method of emancipation, I believe that Turner Ashby and many other slaveowners would have voted for the law, for there was a strong antislavery sentiment among many slaveowners in Virginia, but all recognized that the difficulties of adjusting the interests of the slaveowner and those of the slave were very great, and that these differences required time and patience to regulate for the best good of both the white race and the black. However, the impatience and violent attacks made upon the Southern slaveowner by the abolitionist of the North did much to break down this sentiment and bring about the revolt that followed. The Southern

people resented this attack upon their rights under the Constitution, and none were more incensed than men of Turner Ashby's opinions. Though he would willingly have freed his own negroes for the sake of peace, he was prepared to give his own life,—as he subsequently did,—in the defense of the honor of his State and in support of the rights of his people. He cared little for the institution of slavery, but he cared a great deal for the abuse, misrepresentation, and ignominy which the abolition party in the North was heaping upon the slave-owner of his State. He believed that such statements were unjust, false, and wicked, and that they had their origin in fanaticism and intolerance,—that called for the firmest resistance, and for civil war, if necessary.

A few months ago the writer met an old negro man who belonged to Turner Ashby at the outbreak of the war. At that time he was only a youth, but he remembered his former master with the warmest affection and spoke of him, of his brother Richard, and of other members of the family, in kindest terms. He gave me some interesting facts in regard to the life and habits of these Ashby brothers,—facts which were new to me. The most interesting statement that he made, however, was his relation of the kindness and gen-

erosity of these men to their slaves and the devotion of the slaves to their old master.

No better illustration of Turner Ashby's character as a young man can be given than is presented in the following letter which appeared some years ago in the *New York Evening Post*, with the signature, "G. G. E." :

"During that period of suppressed excitement in Virginia after the John Brown incident at Harper's Ferry, and before the outbreak of the war, a young man from one of the Northern States passed a week or two as a guest in the house of one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Northern Virginia.

"The young man was a Republican in politics, but that fact made no difference in the courtesy or kindness of the host, or in the treatment given him by the gentlefolk of the surrounding country, to whose houses he was freely invited, as a gentleman visiting in the house of a gentleman, their neighbor.

"His business in the neighborhood was social, not political,—he was, in fact, paying his addresses to his host's daughter,—and his political opinions, though perfectly well known, were not discussed and perhaps were not thought of at all.

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One evening during his visit this young man, C. D., was invited, in company with his host's family, to attend a reception given by Turner Ashby on the occasion of a tournament. He went, of course; mingled freely with the other guests, and found nothing in his reception to mark any difference between himself and the other gentlemen present until the supper was served. Then a disagreeable incident occurred.

"A young man of the neighborhood who, as C. D. afterward learned, was a rejected suitor for the hand of the woman to whom he was himself laying siege, approached him as he stood talking with her, and without speaking to C. D. at all, said to the lady: 'Isn't it a sublime piece of impudence for a Yankee and Black Republican to come down here now and accept the hospitality of a Virginia gentleman after all that has happened?' The young woman replied quickly: 'Mr. B., you should be the last person to criticize the catholicity of my father's hospitality. You have profited by his indisposition to draw social lines too sharply. You have been received by him as a guest on several occasions.' The reply was so stinging that the youth straightway withdrew from the supper room, and C. D., thinking it better to retire from a company in which he might

be less welcome than he had supposed, went to the cloak room for his hat and coat. He had scarcely entered the room when B. approached him and said: 'What I have just said had reference to you and was meant to be insulting.'

"Young C. D. had not been used to encounters of this kind, and had little disposition to engage in affairs of honor; but he seriously intended to prosecute his suit for the hand of his host's daughter, and he instinctively knew that all hope of success there must be abandoned if he failed to resent an insult so gross in its nature. He therefore struck his antagonist in the face with the glove he had just drawn from his hand. This was the signal for the persons present in the room to interfere to prevent a brutal fight with fists. A challenge in regular form was quickly given and accepted, and C. D., to have the affair over as speedily as possible, insisted that the duel should be fought at once in a grove near the house by the light of torches. All the persons concerned prepared themselves immediately, and were about to quit the room for the appointed place when Turner Ashby, white with rage, burst open the door. A whisper of what was going on had just reached him. He entered the room, paused a moment and then advanced to B., quivering as he went forward

so violently that half the persons supposed that he meditated an assault upon B. His voice was, however, low, and his speech very deliberate.

“ ‘What is the time fixed for our meeting, Mr. B.?’ he asked.

“ ‘I am to fight Mr. C. D. immediately,’ answered B.

“ ‘I beg your pardon,’ replied Ashby, ‘but Mr. C. D. has nothing to do with this affair. He came to my house to-night as my guest. When I invited him to come the invitation was Turner Ashby’s word of honor that he should be treated here as a gentleman; it was my voucher for his character to my other guests to meet him. I am sorry to have to explain these points of good breeding to you, Mr. B., but you have shown your ignorance of them by insulting my guest. The insult is mine, not his, to resent. He is here under my protection. If you are not prepared to make a proper and satisfactory apology at once, both to my guest and to me, you must fight Turner Ashby, and the time and place agreed upon will answer as well as any other. What do you say, sir?’

“Now fighting a duel with a young man wholly unacquainted with the use of firearms and fighting of any sort was one thing; fighting a duel with Turner Ashby in a rage was very well understood

to be another and a much more serious thing, and young B.'s consciousness of this difference wrought a complete change in his mind. He pleaded in excuse for his conduct the fact that he had been drinking too freely, and signed the pair of apologies which Turner Ashby wrote.

"C. D. ended his visit soon afterwards, and the war came on to prevent its repetition. Turner Ashby's gallantry in war, and courage and command over men, and the story of his death are all matters of history now; 'but his high character,' says C. D., 'never impresses me so strongly in reading of his military exploits as it does when I look at that faded slip of paper written by his hand and signed by B. It is a curious autograph.'"



## CHAPTER IV

### THE JOHN BROWN RAID


**T**HE author has given a brief account of the early life of Turner Ashby in order to show the influences that were at work in his heredity and environment to develop the man and soldier when the opportunity should come to him through the fortunes of war to place his name upon the pages of history. But for the Civil War, the world would never have heard of the distinguished men who made the history of that great conflict brilliant with their achievements. Stonewall Jackson would most probably have passed through life as an obscure professor at the Virginia Military Institute; Turner Ashby would not have been known outside the limits of his own county, and the famous men of the period would have remained, "unhonored and unsung," in the obscurity of private life.

Opportunity is then the only royal road to great and lasting distinction, and it is only the men that are fitted by nature to take advantage of the destiny that shapes their lives that can enjoy the privileges of an immortality which will

live in the records of time. Napoleon has expressed the idea that man's only immortality lies in his living on down future ages in the minds of those who follow him. His towering ambition was to erect a monument of great deeds that would be as lasting as the human race. He may have succeeded, but the practical man will ask: "In what way is the dead Napoleon any better off than the most humble peasant that sleeps in the unknown grave, where his ashes mingle with the clay of ages long gone by? If man is seeking by his work to obtain this character of immortality, his life is a dismal failure. If, to the contrary, his achievements in the service of his country bring him into notice and add to his fame, he has won his distinction by laudable methods, and is entitled to the praise of succeeding generations. I do not believe that Stonewall Jackson, Turner Ashby, or hundreds of other men who have done exceptional things in the world's great work have ever thought of their own glory or been influenced by considerations of personal gain or lasting fame. Many men have died in ignorance of the place they had made for themselves in the world's history, and their names have been rescued from oblivion by the historian of passing events. These have been the true men of all time, who have given

inspiration and set the example of lofty pride to coming generations. It is from this point of view that the author has attempted to give a real picture of the life of Turner Ashby, believing that the service he performed and the distinction he achieved in the discharge of his duties to his State entitle him to this recognition, and that his character as a man and as a soldier should be an inspiration to the men who are to be the servants and the leaders of our race.

At the outbreak of the John Brown Insurrection Turner Ashby was living peacefully and happily in his home at Wolfe's Craig. As captain of a small company of cavalry, made up of the young men of his county, he had no idea of the part he was to play in the historic events of his day. If he had visions of a coming war, he had at that time no assurance of the distinction that was coming to him. It is probable that his modest and unassuming nature had led him to attach but little importance to his military ability, and that he had formed in his mind no idea of his qualifications for the duties of a soldier. Family records and tradition had no doubt kindled in him the love of adventure and the daring for which his ancestors had been so conspicuous. He had read as a boy the diary that his father had kept



of his services during the War of 1812, and these observations of his father were perhaps the foundation of his military training. But the most important lesson he had learned in his youth was the lesson of duty, to which were added a profound love for his native State, and the determination, if the time ever came, to give his best efforts to her service. The latent fire, the heroism of his nature were not developed until the call came to enter Virginia's service.

When the John Brown Insurrection broke out at Harper's Ferry Turner Ashby, with his company of cavalry, was among the first to arrive on the scene. The journey across the mountains consumed less than a day, and, with great expedition, he assembled his men and made the march. When he arrived at Harper's Ferry he was assigned to picket duty, and then began that life of ceaseless activity which characterized his services during the Civil War. His superb horsemanship and knightly appearance at once attracted attention, and he soon became conspicuous among the men then on duty.

The motives that led John Brown to attack the institution of slavery on Virginia soil have time and again been discussed; so that it is scarcely necessary in a work of this character to go over this

ground. The foolhardiness of Brown and his few followers was so apparent that no explanation can be given for his actions other than the wildest fanaticism and the design to force a sentiment in the North against the institution of slavery. He seemed willing to sacrifice himself in a cause which at that time was hopeless. With murder and vengeance in his heart, his object was to arouse the negro against his master and to involve his country in a bloody war.

But he had selected the very worst place in the country to arouse the spirit of the negro, for nowhere in the South was the slave treated with greater consideration than in that section of Virginia. It is probable that the location of the Federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry led to the selection of that place for Brown's first operations. He may have expected to secure arms and ammunition for his men and his negro followers; but in this he miscalculated not only the spirit of the negro but the strength of the Government. Back of Brown was a strong abolition sentiment in the North,—a sentiment that was willing, but not ready, to come to his support,—and, defying law and order, he relied on the moral support of these people.

Widely as the Nation was divided at that time

upon the question of slavery it was not yet prepared for the struggle that came two years later; and the promptness with which the National Government and the State of Virginia came to the suppression of the Brown Insurrection made it evident that public opinion, both in the North and in the South, was crystallizing on an issue that involved many difficulties. Turner Ashby, with many others, believed that a civil war was unavoidable; yet many who held these views hoped that an adjustment would take place by peaceful means. The two radical parties,—the one for, and the other against slavery,—were growing farther and farther apart. The feeling both North and South was intense, and the men of moderate views were overpowered by the blind sentiment that ruled many minds.

Turner Ashby, with his company, remained at Harper's Ferry until after the trial and execution of Brown and his associates. During Ashby's stay there he became acquainted with Gen. R. E. Lee, Jackson, Stuart, and other men who became conspicuous in the Civil War. This short military service was a most valuable experience for Ashby for he here formulated ideas and acquired principles of warfare that led to subsequent development. He attracted the attention of his su-

perior officers and won the confidence of Lee, Jackson, and Stuart, who recognized in him those qualities of the soldier that were so conspicuous in his after life.

When Turner Ashby returned home his closest friends observed a marked change in his habits and character. The gay, joyous, yet gentle citizen had grown sedate and thoughtful; his mind was exercised over the political situation, and he showed signs of anxiety about conditions that threatened to involve his State in serious trouble. The political contest of the following year brought no satisfaction to his soul; for he saw the Democratic party split in fragments and the Nation torn with dissension by rival candidates for the Presidency.

The Republican Party led by Mr. Lincoln had come out with an antislavery platform that clearly indicated the sentiment of the North. As a member of the Whig party, Ashby voted for Bell and Everett, hoping that the more conservative views of the Whigs would exercise the balance of power and lead to more peaceful methods. He was at this time a pronounced Union man and was opposed to the doctrine of secession, if it was possible for Virginia to maintain her rightful po-

sition in the Nation; the election of Mr. Lincoln, however, was a great blow to his hopes of a peaceful adjustment of the differences that divided the Nation. It was not until Mr. Lincoln called on the Southern States for volunteers to coerce the seceding States back into the Union that he assented to the withdrawal of Virginia from the Union.

When Virginia passed the ordinance of secession the die was cast, and with all the loyalty of his heart and all the love for the old State, he determined to enter her service and defend her to the last.

Just previous to the passage of the ordinance of secession Turner Ashby was in Richmond, and after consultation with the governor he hastened home to prepare his company for immediate service as soon as the ordinance should be passed. He had scarcely reached his peaceful mountain home,—the scene of his boyhood days,—when the message came ordering him to proceed to Harper's Ferry. Gathering his men around him, he took up his march to his old camping ground during the Brown Insurrection, and for the last time turned his back on the home he had loved most tenderly. He closed the doors of Wolfe's Craig,



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and never again entered them. His spirit now was absorbed in the fortunes of war. The heroic bent of his mind was fixed on a service to his State,—a service that was to end only with his death.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR

**T**HE election of Mr. Lincoln as President of the United States created great dissatisfaction in the cotton States, and, under the lead of South Carolina, first one and then another of these States withdrew from the Union, and organized the Confederate Government.

The position of Mr. Lincoln as President of the United States was extremely embarrassing. He was forced to do one of two things; either attempt to coerce the seceding States back into the Union, or allow them to withdraw peacefully. The first method was adopted with promptness, and the President called on the States to furnish their pro rata of troops for this purpose. Previous to this call Virginia had hesitated to withdraw from the Union, for many of her people still hoped for a peaceful settlement of the differences in which the country was involved. The convention, then assembled in Richmond had deliberated long and patiently. The time had come when Virginia was forced to make a decision either to side with the Government at Washington or to

join with her sister States of the South in open rebellion against the Union.

The interests of Virginia were closely identified with those of the cotton States. She still maintained the institution of slavery, and she also held to the doctrine of States' Rights as guaranteed by the Constitution. Her people now felt that the time had come for her to identify herself with the newly-formed Confederate Government, and to resist the powers of the Federal Government, which had adopted the policy of coercion.

War was inevitable under the existing conditions; and as soon as the ordinance of secession was passed the Governor of Virginia at once made vigorous efforts to protect the State from an invasion by Federal troops. Organized bodies of troops were at once ordered to Harper's Ferry for the purpose of seizing the Federal property at that place and protecting the border line.

The ordinance of secession was passed on the 17th day of April, 1861. As the news flashed over the country the people of the North and those of the South fully realized that the country was in a state of Civil War, and preparations were made for a contest, which at that time few real-

ized would be one of the greatest civil wars of all ages.

As soon as Turner Ashby could assemble the members of his company he hastened across the mountains and arrived at Harper's Ferry on the evening of the 19th, being among the first to reach the place, which was to be the scene of active military operations.

The Federal authorities, realizing the importance to Virginia of the public buildings and machinery, set fire to all the Government property, and then evacuated the town. Turner Ashby arrived in time to see this property in smoke and ashes. Colonel Harper, of the Virginia Military Institute, was already in command of the troops that were assembling, and was making vigorous preparations for the defense of the place. Harper's Ferry, located at the confluence of the Potomac River and the Shenandoah, is surrounded by high and steep mountain ranges, and was difficult of defense. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ran through the place and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was across the river, on the Maryland side. Railroad communication between the West and East was cut off, and the Government at Washington was at once embarrassed by this fact.

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It was the early policy of the State to hold its border line against invasion.

As the State troops arrived they were assigned to camps for organization and instruction, and vigorous efforts were made to perfect an army organization and military discipline. Among the troops to reach the Ferry were a number of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute, under the command of Maj. T. J. Jackson, who began at once that active system of drill and work that made the men under him so efficient.

The ordinance of secession had no sooner passed than the governor ordered the corps of cadets under the command of Major Jackson to come to Richmond for duty. A camp of instruction was organized, and the advanced members of the class were employed in drilling raw troops as they assembled. Major Jackson rendered efficient duty, but he wanted more active service at the front. On the 26th of April the Governor gave him a commission as colonel of volunteers, and assigned him to the command of the forces then assembling at Harper's Ferry.

Colonel Jackson, who found these troops in great confusion and disorder, at once began to remove incompetent officers and to discipline the men, and soon gained the reputation of being a

most unmerciful drill-master and disciplinarian. He, however, soon brought order out of confusion, and made a military weapon that was not surpassed in the progress of the war. Jackson first had the men instructed in marching and counter-marching, then in the manual of arms and later in the duties of the guard and of the camp. Those valuable lessons that taught endurance on the march and courage and resistance in battle were given during the subsequent campaigns.

Soon after Turner Ashby reached Harper's Ferry he was assigned by Colonel Harper to picket and guard duty along the bank of the Potomac between Harper's Ferry and Point of Rocks, a small railroad station on the north bank of the river, twelve miles east of the Ferry. Ashby had at this time his own company, which was soon enlarged by new members and by other men who came under his command. He soon had several companies of infantry and a battery of six guns, under the command of Imboden. His duties at the Point of Rocks were to guard the bridge across the Potomac at that point and to interrupt the passage of railroad trains and canal boats. He was vigilant in his activities, living the greater portion of his time on his horse's back, and cover-

ing wide distances in watching the movements of the enemy. He not only guarded the passages of the river, but he assisted many men from Maryland in crossing over to join the Confederate forces. He disciplined and trained the men under him, and laid the foundation for the promotion that soon came to him. The story is told that while at the Point of Rocks he dressed himself in the garb of an itinerant horse doctor and went on a foot expedition through the border counties making observations, and watching the movements of the Federals. It is said too that he visited Washington in this capacity on one occasion and learned much about the conditions then existing in the capital. How much truth there is in these stories I do not know, but this fact is true: his scouts on horseback were wide and hazardous, and his activities were phenomenal.

While stationed along the Potomac Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was placed in command of the forces assembled at the Ferry, and by his instructions Ashby was ordered to destroy the railroad and dams of the canal whenever it should be found necessary. General Lee, writing to General Johnston on May 30, 1861, endorses the military judgment displayed by Ashby in holding

the Point of Rocks as an outpost and connecting link between Leesburg and Harper's Ferry.<sup>1</sup>

Ashby's military judgment in guarding the line of the Potomac met with the generous approval of both Lee and Johnston, and drew attention to his efficient and laborious services. General Johnston now ordered Ashby to report to Col. J. E. B. Stuart, then in command of cavalry under Johnston at the Ferry. At the same time Ashby had already been ordered by Colonel McDonald to report to his own regiment, the Seventh Virginia Cavalry. In refusing to obey General Johnston's orders, Ashby called the commanding officer's attention to two facts: first, that Colonel McDonald had already ordered him to report to his own regiment, and second, that the Governor of Virginia had expressly provided that the troops of the State, when mustered into the service of the Confederate States, should preserve their "regimental organization."

In reply to Ashby General Johnston wrote the following letter:

"HARPER'S FERRY, June 16, 1861.

"CAPTAIN:

"Your party has just reported to me. Let

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, p. 23.



me offer my cordial thanks for your services, especially the last. I assure you that the knowledge that you were between me and the enemy made me sleep soundly last night, and that your presence among the troops under my command would always have such an effect. Whenever I may be serving under circumstances agreeable to you, be assured that it would be a matter of professional and personal gratification to me to be associated with you.

"With the hope of meeting you often hereafter, I remain,

"Respectfully and truly,

"J. E. JOHNSTON."<sup>2</sup>

General Johnston had assembled an army of some ten thousand men at Harper's Ferry and had molded these men into fairly good shape. Jackson had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general and to him had been assigned the command of five Virginia regiments: the Second Virginia, Colonel Allen; the Fourth Virginia, Colonel Preston; the Fifth Virginia, Colonel Harper; the Twenty-seventh Virginia, Lieutenant-Colonel Echols, and the Thirty-third Virginia, Colonel Cummings. A battery of artillery, raised in

<sup>2</sup> Thomas.

Rockbridge County, was attached to his command. The organization subsequently became the Stonewall Jackson Brigade, and made in history a name that will last as long as the Virginia hills.

The Federal forces under the command of General Patterson, numbering about 12,000 men, were gathering along the North bank of the Potomac in the neighborhood of Williamsport and were threatening Johnston's rear. As has been said, Harper's Ferry, being a difficult place to defend,—surrounded as it was by mountains and the two rivers, which exposed it to flank attacks,—General Johnston, after consultation with General Lee, decided to evacuate the place and take a position in front of Winchester and Martinsburg. He removed all the machinery recovered from the wreck of the burned arsenal, destroyed the bridge across the Potomac and other public property, and on June 14 retired in the direction of Winchester.

Patterson soon crossed from Maryland into Virginia, and began an invasion of the soil of that State. The two armies remained facing each other for some weeks, without coming to an engagement,—except one small combat near Falling Waters between Jackson and the advance-guard of Patterson. Already there had been active

preparation on both sides for the struggle that was to come later. The Federals had collected around Washington a large army that was preparing for a move against Beauregard at Manassas.

The plans of the Federals called for an invasion of Southern territory. The Confederates were on the defensive, waiting for the attack of the enemy. The test of strength had not been made, and few had any conception of what war was in reality. Perhaps no man in the army was more eager to make this test of strength than was Jackson, for he was filled with the spirit of combat, and chafed under the forced idleness of the campaign. He had received his commission as brigadier-general in the Confederate army on July 3, and was greatly pleased with his promotion from the State service to that of the Confederacy; for many of the officers and men up to this time were still in the employ of the State, and were serving under old commissions and without regular assignments to definite commands,—either regimental or brigade,—a thorough organization of the army having not yet been effected. This was shown in the letter that passed between Ashby and General Johnston, to which reference has been made.

When the volunteer companies began to assem-

ble at Harper's Ferry in the latter part of April a few cavalry companies had been got together by Col. Angus McDonald of Winchester, and been formed into a regiment, which was afterwards known as the Seventh Virginia Cavalry.

Colonel McDonald was a graduate of West Point, but was at that time over 62 years of age, and in infirm health. Turner Ashby had been assigned to his command.

## CHAPTER VI

### ASHBY'S PROMOTION TO LIEUTENANT-COLONEL OF CAVALRY

**T**HE Confederate Government which had been organized during the early spring months transferred the seat of government to Richmond on the 20th of May, when Mr. Davis, the President, arrived in the capital of Virginia. The Confederate Congress was already in session in Richmond, and its organization was in active operation on the policies of the civil administration. By a special agreement the Confederate States stood pledged to defend Virginia against all her enemies, upon condition that the State would transfer to the Government all her arms and ammunition for the benefit of the general defense. It was then understood that Virginia would be the chief battle-ground,—the theatre of war action,—and it was thought that Richmond was the proper place for the capital.

The work of organization of the Confederate armies was actively pushed forward under the direction of General Cooper, the Adjutant-General of the army, when the management of the armies passed from the hands of the State into those of

the Confederate Government. Soon after Harper's Ferry had been occupied, the work of organization of the cavalry in the valley had been started by Colonel McDonald. He had obtained from the War Department permission to raise a force of mounted men for the special use of the valley service. To perfect this organization, and to bring all the cavalry companies under one command he asked the Government that Capt. Turner Ashby be commissioned as lieutenant-colonel of the newly-formed regiment.

Colonel McDonald's letter reads as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS, ROMNEY, VA.

June 25, 1861.

"HON. L. P. WALKER,

"Secretary of War, Richmond, Va.

"SIR: On the 5th instant I had the honor to receive at the hands of the President the commission of colonel of cavalry in the Army of the Confederate States. On the fifteenth instant Capt. Turner Ashby, commanding a troop belonging to Colonel Hunton's Regiment, reported he had obtained from General Johnston permission to rejoin his own regiment; therefore his troop joined me at Winchester. I am obliged, therefore, to ask—in advance of the full organization of my

regiment—that Captain Ashby be commissioned as lieutenant-colonel, and Dr. O. R. Funsten as major of my regiment. As to Captain Ashby, I need not speak of his qualities, for already he is known as one of the best partisan leaders in the service. Himself a thorough soldier, he is eminently qualified to command. I sincerely trust that the commission asked for may issue to him. In order that the demoralizing influences of campaign life, particularly that which attaches to border war, may be counteracted as far as possible, the Rev. James B. Avirett, of the Episcopal Church, has been induced to accompany the command as acting Chaplain of the regiment. I ask, therefore, that this gentleman may be appointed Chaplain of my command, and that his commission may issue for same. I have the honor to be most respectfully your obedient servant,

“ANGUS W. McDONALD,  
“Col. Cav. C. S. Army.”

This request of Colonel McDonald brought the following official order:

“HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,  
“July 23, 1861.

“COLONEL:

“You have been appointed lieutenant-colonel

in the Virginia Cavalry, with orders to report to General Johnston. The General directs me to say that he will leave it optional with yourself, either to remain with Colonel McDonald or to report to him.

"Respectfully your obedient servant,

"THOS. G. RHETT,

"A. A. General.

"To Lieutenant-Colonel Turner Ashby."

Turner Ashby joined the regiment that was being organized by Colonel McDonald and became the second in command. This regiment became the famous Seventh Virginia Cavalry, and, as re-organized on the 17th of June, 1861, contained the following field and staff officers:

Colonel,  
Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Major,  
Adjutant,  
Surgeon,  
Assistant-Surgeon,  
Chaplain,  
Ass't-Quartermaster,  
A. C. S.

Angus W. McDonald,  
Turner Ashby,  
O. R. Funsten,  
A. W. McDonald, Jr.  
Dr. A. P. Burns,  
Dr. T. L. Settle,  
Rev. J. B. Avirett,  
Capt. T. P. Pendleton,  
Capt. John D. Richardson.



Thus it will be seen that the work of organization of the cavalry in the valley,—a work that has been but recently begun by Colonel McDonald,—had now been perfected, and this famous force, the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, which was to play such a heroic part in the struggle for Southern principles, was ready for campaign life, qualified to defend the State, and eager for active service.

The following companies formed the regiment:

Company

A,	Capt. Richard Ashby, Fauquier Co., Va.		
B,	" J. Q. Winfield, Rockingham	"	"
C,	" S. D. Myers, Shenandoah	"	"
D,	" Macon Jordan, Page	"	"
E,	" Walter Bowen, Warren	"	"
F,	" G. H. Sheets, Hampshire	"	"
G,	" Frank Mason	Maryland	
H,	" A. Harper, Shenandoah Co.,	Va.	
I,	" E. H. Shans, Rockingham	"	"
K,	" Wm. Miller, Shenandoah	"	"

With the organization of the Seventh Virginia the active work of Turner Ashby really began, and the distinction he subsequently made was in

connection with this regiment. Up to this time he had been assigned to outpost and picket duty along the Potomac, and while he had been most active and efficient in service, he had done no real fighting.

Of the ten companies that formed the Seventh Virginia Cavalry at the time of its organization only one had been organized before the beginning of the Civil War,—Company A, at first commanded by Turner Ashby, and now commanded by his brother Richard Ashby. The other companies,—the membership of which was made up of the very best young men in northern Virginia and Maryland, men who had been trained from youth to outdoor life and rural sports,—had been formed since Virginia had seceded, and had seen no military service. All these young men were good riders and owned their horses,—which were the best of mounts,—and, since they excelled in horsemanship, this gave them a great advantage in cavalry service.

As these companies had been enlisted in a few weeks' time they were poorly uniformed, armed, and equipped for military service. Many of them still wore civilian clothes, or uniforms made of gray, without regularity of color or make, and were armed with double-barreled shotguns, rifles,

or pistols of all makes. Few of them had sabres or swords, and all rode the citizen saddle, and carried their clothes in the old-time saddle-bags or rolled in bundles, which were attached in every kind of manner to their saddles. It would be difficult to imagine a more motley crowd of men. Without drill or discipline, they presented the appearance of a band of freebooters rather than a troop of organized cavalrymen. Whatever they lacked in the equipment of the trained soldier they made up for in their fidelity to duty and in their desire to render efficient military service. They were dangerous men, because they were fired with courage and resolution. They had gone to war to win battles, and beneath their poverty of outward show was concealed a spirit of dash and daring that made them reckless. These men soon got down to the real work of war, and in a few months had become so efficient that they were able to improve their military equipment by captures from the enemy.

Col. Angus W. McDonald, the commander of this regiment, was a man of force and a most interesting character. He was born in Winchester, Va., on February 22, 1799, and was the eldest son of Maj. A. W. McDonald, who was an officer in the United States Army and who

died in 1814. His paternal grandfather was a colonel in the provisional army of Virginia who, having come to this country from Scotland in 1746, had settled near Winchester. It was but natural that Colonel McDonald should have great love for the Valley of Virginia, as well as for his native State. Having been graduated from West Point in 1818 at the age of nineteen, he served a number of years in the United States Army. He resigned from the army and took up the study and practice of law in Winchester, where he was married in 1827. His first wife having died in 1843 and having left him with a large family of children, he married again in 1846, and soon after moved to Missouri, where he lived several years; but at length resumed the practice of law in Winchester, where he was living at the beginning of the war. Soon after the organization of the Seventh Virginia, Colonel McDonald and his regiment were ordered to do duty in what is now West Virginia.

The town of Romney, situated on the Northwestern Pike, forty-three miles from Winchester, was chosen as the center of Colonel McDonald's operations. This place was some fourteen miles from Cumberland, Md., on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The Confederate authorities,

deeming it necessary to prevent the use of this road and to destroy the track and bridges wherever possible, Colonel McDonald was instructed to destroy the bridge over Cheat River and at other places, if possible, and also to protect Hampshire and Hardy counties from Federal invasion. On the 17th of June he started with his regiment for the new seat of operations.

Colonel McDonald moved west by the Northwestern Pike and encamped the first night at Hanging Rock, twenty-eight miles from Winchester. The following day he reached Romney, where he went into camp. This was made a camp of instruction and of outpost to watch the movements of the Federals. Up to this time the men,—with the exception of Company A,—had had little military service, and were poorly trained for active work in the field. Colonel McDonald gave much attention to the discipline and drill of the camp, and to the preparation of both man and horse for field work. He sent scouts to the western part of the counties along the lines of the railroad for the purpose of gaining information and to watch the movements of the Federals then stationed at Cumberland. He now divided his command, and assigned Turner Ashby to duty on the south branch of the Potomac River, six miles

north of Romney, on the farm of Col. George Washington, which he selected as his camp.

At this time the sentiment between the citizens of that section was greatly divided. There were some Union people who were very troublesome to the Confederates, acting as spies and informers, and giving information to the Federal commander at Cumberland that was very prejudicial to the Confederate army. Colonel McDonald determined that these men should be arrested or forced to go within the lines of the Federals, and Turner Ashby was very active in hunting down the informers. He also watched very closely the trains on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and did much to disturb the operations of the road. Owing to Colonel McDonald's age and infirm health he was not able to do active outpost duty, and this work was assigned to his lieutenant-colonel, who was constantly in the saddle, and most active in the discharge of his military duties. Turner Ashby was forging rapidly to the front as an officer and his popularity was increasing daily, while men were constantly coming in daily to join his command, and the regiment was improving in efficiency because of the exercise of camp life and the activities of scout duty.

## CHAPTER VII

### DEATH OF RICHARD ASHBY

**T**URNER ASHBY had with him at Colonel Washington's farm his old company, now commanded by his brother Richard. The two brothers were devoted to each other and were inseparable. Richard was three years younger than Turner, having been born on October 2, 1831. He was a larger and handsomer man than Turner, and had had a larger experience in the world, as he had lived several years in the far West, where he had had some experience in Indian warfare. A brave and dashing fellow, full of fire and adventure, he had entered the army, with all the zeal of his ardent nature. In appearance he was six feet tall, well proportioned, and strikingly handsome in face. Having succeeded to the command of Company A through the promotion of Turner, he had entered upon a brilliant military career. His company was, by all odds, the best drilled and best disciplined company in the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, as it had been trained by Turner and had had a larger experience in scout and camp duty.

On the morning of the 26th of June Turner

Ashby determined to run down and arrest a noted Union man who had given considerable trouble and whose arrest was deemed necessary. Richard Ashby, with eleven men of his company, was detailed to do this work. After going to the home of this man they found that he had gone within the enemies' lines. Pushing his way through by-paths and woods, Richard reached the track of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad where it winds along the bank of the Potomac in a gorge in the mountain. It seems that the Federals had an intimation of his presence, and set a trap to catch him. Unexpectedly he ran into a large body of cavalry, which made an attack on him. As he was largely outnumbered, he ordered a retreat along the railroad track, where he was hotly pursued by the Federal cavalry. He happened that morning to be mounted on an indifferent horse, and being in the rear closing the retreat, he turned in his saddle to fire his pistol, without paying any heed to his horse. The animal came to a railroad guard and, in attempting to jump the cattle-stop, fell and threw its rider. Captain Ashby jumped up, and taking a position in the stop, continued to fire at the enemy that was approaching him. Although the odds against him were great he refused to surrender, and was soon crippled with bullets.



After he had received six dangerous wounds he fell exhausted. The Federals then came up to him and one desperado, not satisfied with the wounds already inflicted on the young Confederate, ran a bayonet through Dick's abdomen giving him a fatal wound. He was left for dead on the railroad track, but he rallied sufficiently from the shock of his wounds to crawl under the shade of a tree close to the track.

Turner Ashby, with a body of cavalry, happened to be close by, and heard the firing. He rushed his men forward, and found a company of cavalry across the river on Kelly's Island. Hurriedly fording the river he charged and, though greatly outnumbered, routed these men. He and his men emptied a number of saddles and drove the Federals off the island after making some captures. Turner found his brother's horse and spurs, which circumstance led him to believe that Richard had been killed. He began at once to search for the body, and at length found Dick under the tree, but barely alive. The soldiers made a hammock out of a blanket, suspended between two poles, and carried him, in his exhausted condition, to the home of Colonel Washington.

"Dick" Ashby, as he was affectionately called

by his intimate friends, was a man of great vitality, and by his resolute will he rallied for a time from the shock of his wounds; but he had been so vitally injured by the stab in his abdomen that, after a fight of seven days and despite the most loving and skillful attention of his surgeons and friends, he succumbed to the forces of nature.

The death of Dick Ashby brought great sorrow to his brother and to the entire command. He was a picturesque character, and no man in the army was more beloved and admired than was he. He was heroic in his nature, and the manner of his death showed that he possessed courage and daring of the highest order. Had he lived he would, no doubt, have reached great distinction; but at the age of twenty-nine, and within less than three months after he had entered the army, he was cut down at the post of duty.

Turner was deeply saddened by his brother's death, and a change came over his nature which made him another man. He bore his sorrow with a resignation that was pathetic, when the influence of this sorrow upon his after life is considered. The following letter to his sister Dora shows the spirit that possessed his heart as well as his deep grief and lofty patriotism:

"CAMP WASHINGTON, July 7, 1861.

"DEAR DORA:

"I received your letter a few days ago, and take this evening to write a few lines, urging and entreating, that you may all look upon our affliction as patriots, not selfishly mourning over our untimely loss, but regarding it as a sacrifice made upon the altar of our country, which we ought to congratulate ourselves we could furnish. Poor Dick went into the war like myself, not to regard himself or our friends, but to serve our country in this time of peril. I know your Ma and Mary will all be too good soldiers to grudge giving to your country the dearest sacrifice that you could provide. Yours is the good fortune to be called upon to provide so great an offering. His country has lost the services of a brave man, with a strong arm, which he proved upon her enemies in losing his life. As he has ever won praises from them for the greatest bravery they ever saw, you all (and I mean this for you all) do not know what a weight it would take from me to know that you bore our loss like soldiers. I had rather it had been myself. He was younger and had one more tie to break than I. But seeing him through the time of his prostration from his wounds, I know that he felt that he was but los-

ing his life in the cause of duty, and seemed entirely resigned, not despondent at the doubts which he knew there existed of his life. We all believed for a part of the time that he would recover. At one time he thought so too. But the exposure, without attention, for several hours upon the battlefield so prostrated him as to make it hard for reaction to take place, which kept him from having any appetite. He lived until the eighth day, suffering very little for one so cut to pieces. He was buried with all the honors of war, and never was greater respect paid to the memory of one man; it was indeed a triumph of his bravery.

“I had him buried in a beautiful cemetery in Romney; and should I live through the war, I will have him removed to Fauquier. Mine has been the heaviest loss. I lose the strength of his arm in the fight as well as the companion of my social hours. I mean to bear it as a soldier, and not as one who in this time for sacrifices regards only his own loss. You all must try to bear it in the same way. Let it be your boast that you have given a brother for the safety of your country and the preservation of your homes, and Ma’s that she has given a son for such a cause as ours. When men die as he has died (and as

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he was prepared to die) for liberty, it shows our enemies that we cannot be conquered. It saves the lives of many.

"George (his faithful family servant) is well and sends his love to his wife. Our movements here are not yet determined. I may not write often from here, but should there be anything the matter will do so at once.

"Very truly

"TURNER ASHBY."

Richard Ashby died on the 3d of July, 1861, just seven days after he had received his wounds. He had borne his sufferings with courage and patience, and had received during his illness the most tender attentions from Turner and many friends.

Capt. Richard Ashby was buried with all the honors of war in the Indian Mound Cemetery near Romney. "But the grief of his brother, Turner," says Avirett, "was not, as has been described by a Southern writer, excessive nor demonstrative. He did not break his brother's sabre and cast the pieces into the grave; nor did he kneel to register a vow of revenge. His grief, too deep for words, was too holy to be tintured with the earth-born passion of revenge. Though upon the battlefield the memory of his brother

may have made him charge more desperately, that day, as far as outward bearing could indicate, there was no admixture of any passion with his deep grief,—the deeper because so silent.”

The fight on Kelly's Island,—so desperately contested by Turner Ashby and his few men, and followed later by the death of Richard Ashby,—made a profound impression upon the members of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry. Turner, at all times popular with the men of his command, now became the idol of the regiment and he drew around him a personal following,—a fact that contributed greatly to his success as an officer. Company after company was added to the regiment, so that before his death the organization numbered twenty-six companies and one battery of horse artillery.

Colonel McDonald was at this time growing feeble under the hardships of military service. He suffered greatly from attacks of gout and rheumatism, which interfered with his activities, and for this reason he was unable to do the more active work devolving upon the commander of the regiment, much of which work he loyally assigned to Turner Ashby, who had all the strength and endurance of youth, united with the zeal and fire of early manhood.

Too much cannot be said of the courage, loyalty, and ability of Colonel McDonald. At an advanced age he had taken up arms in defense of the South, and he had thrown into his work all the zeal and force of a strong character. The organization of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry was the work of his hands and influence; and, having early discovered the military ability of Turner Ashby, he had associated him with himself as second in command. Colonel McDonald had with him in the army five sons, all of whom rose to positions of distinction during the war. They did honor to their Scotch blood, and were worthy sons of their distinguished sire. Later in the war, —when Colonel McDonald was forced by feeble health to retire from active service in the field,—his loyalty to the South never wavered, and he gave his life to a disease contracted in the prison of the enemy.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BATTLE OF MANASSAS. RETURN TO THE VALLEY

ON July 17, 1861, Colonel McDonald received orders to return to Winchester with his command. At this time General Patterson was in front of Bunker's Hill, twelve miles north of Winchester, with an army of 30,000 men. General Johnston had around Winchester some 10,000 men opposing Patterson, who had been instructed to hold Johnston in the valley while McDowell was preparing to advance against Beauregard at Manassas.

McDowell had assembled at Washington an army of 50,000 men, a portion of which,—numbering some 29,000,—was already south of the Potomac. At Manassas Beauregard had about 20,000 men to oppose this large force under McDowell.


On July 18, McDowell had reached the Confederate lines around Manassas, and had made an assault on Beauregard. On the same morning Beauregard wired to Johnston to join him at Manassas. Leaving Stuart in front of Patterson, Johnston took up the line of march and crossed



through Ashby's Gap into eastern Virginia. The army encamped the first night near Paris, in Fauquier County, and the following morning took the cars,—at what is now Delaplane Station,—for Manassas.

On the morning of July 21, the three brigades (Jackson's, Bee's, and Bartow's) with the cavalry and artillery, had joined Beauregard at Manassas in time to engage in the battle that was fought that day. The timely arrival of the Army of the Shenandoah saved the day and led to the disastrous rout of the Federal army under McDowell. The brilliant work of Jackson and his brigade immortalized both the men and their commander. It was in this battle that the illustrious Bee baptized Jackson and his brigade with the name of "Stonewall,"—a name that will go down in history surrounded by a glory seldom conferred upon men.

The brilliant victory won by the Confederates at Manassas was, in the light of subsequent events, costly and prophetic. It gave the people of the South and the Confederate Government an overconfidence in the prowess of the Southern soldier and in the resources of the Confederate Government, which were not justified. It made them underrate the strength, resourcefulness, and determination of the North. The Confederacy went



to sleep over the victory, while the Federal Government waked up to a full realization of the situation, and began at once to make preparations for a war of gigantic proportions. The entire North was aroused to action and became unified in the determination to restore the Union at any cost. Men were enlisted, armies were organized, and all the equipments of war were gathered for offensive warfare.

On the part of the Confederacy the opportunities to strengthen the resources of the civil authorities and to fortify the armies of the South were sadly neglected. An aggressive movement that should have followed the battle was suffered to pass by, and the army was held in camp on a strictly defensive policy. While the Confederate troops were kept in this waiting attitude, the Federals were busy preparing for active operations in the coming spring and summer months. It will be recalled that after the victory at Manassas both Beauregard and Stonewall Jackson urged an aggressive campaign and the invasion of Maryland; but they were overruled by the Government at Richmond and the policy of quiet defense was adopted for the winter. The army went into winter quarters and little was done to perfect the organization of new troops.

The Government at Richmond was even more apathetic, at a time when there was abundant opportunity to strengthen the financial resources of the Government and to prepare for a war of endurance and power. For the Southern ports were then open, and millions of bales of cotton, owned by the Government, were piled up in warehouses. Had this cotton been shipped to Europe, a credit in money or in securities could have been established which would have given the Government a financial strength of vast importance. In that event, it would have been possible to purchase war vessels and military supplies, which would have been of invaluable service in the prosecution of the war. The heroism and patriotism of the South were fully aroused, but its business sense had been lost in sleep. The civil authorities seemed to think that the success of the South depended entirely on the courage and valor of its troops, and that armies could be maintained on the spirit of the men that fought its battles.

The North took an entirely different view. It fully realized that the success of a war of subjugation depended upon money as much as upon men, and it began to forge a military weapon that would wear out the South by exhaustion and by the depletion of its armies and of the resources


that supported these men in the field. The policies of the two Governments were framed upon different maxims of warfare, and it was due to these differences in the principles of military operations that the North was finally able to break down the resistance of the South. Therefore the great victory won by the Confederates at Manassas, was, no doubt, an indirect cause of the policies adopted and enforced by the two Governments. The eyes of the North were opened, the eyes of the South were closed, the North realized,—what the South failed to realize,—the fundamental conditions necessary to the successful conduct of the war, and took measures along practical lines to wage a war of invasion and coercion. Stonewall Jackson was among the leading generals of the South to realize the situation. After the victory at Manassas, as has been said, he urged aggressive warfare, proposing an advance on Washington and the invasion of Maryland before the North should have time to organize an army for the invasion of the South.

The adoption of Jackson's policy would have brought the contest to a speedy conclusion. The South would either have won out or would have gone down in disaster before her resources were exhausted by the years of struggle that followed.

A basis of settlement would, no doubt, have been reached, which would have been far more advantageous than the one that was finally reached; thousands of lives and millions of money would have escaped the destruction of the four years that followed; the history of the times would have changed, and the glory that came to the men who were lifted into prominence by the war would not have been so conspicuous. But against this the happiness and prosperity of the people of kindred blood would have weighed in the balance to offset the sufferings and losses of civil strife.

The historian of to-day may vainly speculate on what might have been, but he cannot suspend his judgment without protest against the folly of the time when the passions and prejudices of men ruled their spirit and the lessons of wisdom were disregarded. The Confederate Government failed to take advantage of the opportunities presented during the first year of the war, while the Federal Government profited by reverses,—reverses which at that time might have been irremediable.

The great victory at Manassas was made indecisive through the inactivity and hesitation of the Confederate Government, and the battle goes down in history as one of the lost opportunities.



The destinies of individuals and of nations have often depended,—do often depend,—upon apparently trivial circumstances. History is filled with the errors of human judgment, and events are but the results of the success or failure of human actions. Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo because Grouchy failed to come to his support at the critical moment; and thus the political history of Europe was changed by the act of one man. The assassins' daggers destroyed the life of Cæsar and brought on a civil war that laid the foundation of the Roman Empire.

The Seventh Virginia Cavalry did not reach Winchester from Romney until the 19th of July. It was ordered to scout along Patterson's lines and ascertain the position of the Federal army. When it was learned that Patterson was encamped near Charlestown and was not threatening Winchester the regiment hastily marched to join Johnston at Manassas. On the 21st the regiment crossed the Blue Ridge through Ashby's Gap and went into camp that night at Upperville, where the reports of the fight at Manassas could be plainly heard, the sound of the artillery being quite distinct.

The next day the march was continued and in the evening the Seventh went into camp near Hay Market, not far from the battlefield of the previ-

ous day. There the news of the great victory was gladly received, but the men were disappointed at not having arrived in time to take part in the battle. Turner Ashby spent the greater part of the day in riding over the field of battle, and expressed to his comrades great pleasure over the distinction won by his friend and associate in arms, General Jackson. That evening the Seventh was ordered to encamp at Bristow Station, on the railroad some six miles from Manassas Junction.

Early the following morning the regiment was ordered to go to Staunton in the valley. The purpose of this movement was not understood, but it was believed that an attack on Staunton from the West was contemplated and that its defence was necessary. The line of march lay through the counties of Fauquier and Rappahannock, over the Blue Ridge through Thornton's Gap, into the Page Valley, across the Page Valley to the main valley of the Shenandoah at New Market, then south to Staunton. Though the route brought Turner Ashby within a half day's ride of his home at Markham, he did not leave his command to visit his old friends and to attend to his interests, which had been neglected since he had entered the army. During his entire life in the army he was never absent from his command a single day on furlough.

He was ever at the post of duty, and until his death led a life of incessant activity and toil. An early riser, he was up with the dawn of day, and was always ready for work, no matter how hard nor dangerous. His wiry, elastic, and energetic build gave him a great advantage over the ordinary man, and enabled him to endure fatigue which few men could undergo. His home was in the saddle, and the ease with which he rode, the pride he took in his horses, and his love of the outdoor life contributed to his health and pleasure. He found pleasure in the exercise of his military duties,—duties that were irksome to many men. It was a remark of his friends that he was able to cover in his rides on scouting parties distances that few of his companions could maintain with him. On a number of occasions he was known to cover on two mounts no less than seventy-five to eighty miles in a day.

I remember as a small boy that I was visiting the home of relatives living in the village of Luray when the Seventh Virginia Regiment passed through to encamp that night in a piece of woods about one mile west of the village. An incident happened then that made a strong impression on my mind. At the beginning of the war my father had owned a splendid riding horse by the name of



Dan. I learned to ride this horse and was greatly attached to him. When a cavalry company, now attached to the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, was organized in my county this horse was taken into the service of the company's service. As the regiment was marching through Luray Dan's rider dismounted for some purpose and let the bridle-rein fall. Dan ran away and, in high spirit, came running down the pike, with head and tail erect. I was standing near the roadside and recognized the horse as he was coming my way. Involuntarily I cried out, "Whoa, Dan! Whoa!" The animal seemed to recognize me for he immediately checked his pace, and came up to where I was standing. Catching him by the rein, I patted his head until his rider came and took him. I never saw Dan after this. The regiment moved the following morning on its way to Staunton.

The distance from Manassas to Staunton was over one hundred miles, and was covered in less than four days. This gave the men and horses abundant exercise and an opportunity to improve the discipline of the camp and the march. It was supposed that upon reaching Staunton the regiment would be ordered to proceed west along the pike, which led into the mountains of western Virginia, where General Rosecrans had assem-

bled a large force. It was soon discovered, however, that Rosecrans was not moving towards Staunton, but had returned in the opposite direction. The Seventh was then ordered to return to Winchester, in the lower valley, for duty in the border counties and to protect the farmers in gathering such crops as had not been destroyed by the armies.

The march from Staunton to Winchester was over the Valley Pike and through that beautiful section of country that was later the great battle-ground of the South,—a region made famous by the work of Jackson, Ashby, and of those that followed them in the subsequent campaigns in that section. This was the first time the men of the Seventh Cavalry had seen the Upper Valley, every foot of which was later to become so familiar to them.

Upon reaching Winchester Colonel McDonald was ordered to take eight companies of the regiment to the south branch of the Potomac to protect that fertile section from the raids of the Federals. Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby was ordered to take the remainder of the regiment to Kearneysville,—on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, about an equal distance from Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry,—in order to protect the men that were tak-

ing up the materials from the railroad, which had been destroyed by General Johnston during the previous months. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had been put out of service, and all transportation by this route between the West and Washington had been cut off. It was the purpose of the Confederate Government to destroy this road so completely that it would be of no further value to the Federal Government, and Turner Ashby was instructed to do this work. With this object in view, he went into camp near Shepherdstown, and threw out his pickets along the line of the road for some miles. He was also instructed to destroy the dams and banks of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal which extended along the banks of the Potomac on the Maryland side. Ashby's activities at this time were enormous, as he had a large territory to guard, and the enemy was equally industrious in trying to defeat his plans. The border line was hotly contested and a number of sharp engagements took place between the opposing sides. Raiding parties from the Maryland side of the river were constantly crossing over into Virginia, and they frequently annoyed the citizens and interrupted the work of dismantling the railroad. Having completed the

work on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Colonel Ashby went into camp on a beautiful estate, known as "Wheatland," near Charlestown, where he could better watch the Federal forces that were now collecting at Harper's Ferry, six miles north.

With less than four hundred men under his command,—a force largely made up of militia,—he was confronting General Geary, with a force of nearly 1500 men.


On the morning of October 16, General Geary moved his force out of Harper's Ferry and advanced toward Charlestown. Colonel Ashby, observing this movement, decided to strike the first blow. With six companies of the Seventh Cavalry and three hundred militia armed with flint-lock muskets, he advanced toward Harper's Ferry and ran up against the enemy on Boliver Heights,—a high plateau overlooking the Ferry, and extending from the Shenandoah to the Potomac River. The men were formed in line of battle, and the attack was made with vigor. This was the first large engagement in which Ashby had ~~had~~ the sole responsibility of command. The manner in which he handled the affair is best told in his own report to the Acting Secretary of War.

"CAMP EVANS, HALLTOWN, VA.

"OCT. 17TH. 1861.

"My Dear Sir:

"I herewith submit the result of an engagement had with the enemy on yesterday at Boliver Hill. The enemy occupying that position for several days, had been committing depredations in the vicinity of the camp. Having at my disposal three hundred militia armed with flint-lock muskets and two companies of cavalry,—Turner's and Mason's of Colonel McDonald's regiment,—I wrote to General Evans to coöperate with me, taking position on Loudon Heights, and thereby prevent reenforcements from below, and at the same time to drive them out of the Ferry, where they were under cover in the buildings. On the evening of the fifteenth I was re-enforced by two companies of Colonel McDonald's regiment (Captain Wingfield), fully armed with minie rifles and mounted; Captain Miller's about thirty men mounted, the balance on foot and with flint-lock guns. I had one rifled four-pound gun and one 24-pound gun badly mounted, which broke an axle in Boliver, and I had to spike it. My force on the morning of the attack consisted of 300 militia, part of two regiments, commanded by Colonel Albert of Shenandoah and Major Finter



of Page. I had 180 of Colonel McDonald's Cavalry (Captain Henderson's men), under command of Lieutenant Glynn; Captain Baylor's mounted militia, Captain Hess, about twenty-five men. The rifled gun was under command of Captain Avirett, the 24-pound gun, under command of Captain Comfield. I made the attack in three divisions and drove the enemy from their breastworks without the loss of a man, and took position upon the hill, driving the enemy as far as Lower Boliver. The large gun broke down, and this materially affected the result. The detachment from the large gun was transferred to the rifled piece, and Captain Avirett was sent to Loudon Heights with a message to Colonel Griffin. The enemy now formed and charged with shouts and yells, and the militia met them like veterans. At this moment I ordered a charge of cavalry, which was handsomely done,—Captain Turner in the lead. In the charge five of the enemy were killed. After holding this position for four hours the enemy were re-enforced by infantry and artillery, and we fell back in order to the position their pickets held in the morning. The position Colonel Griffin held upon Loudon was such as to be of very little assistance to us, not being so elevated as to prevent them from controlling the

crossing. My main force is now at Camp Evans, while I hold all intermediate ground. The enemy left the Ferry last night and encamped on Maryland Heights. My loss was one killed and nine wounded. We have two prisoners and eight Union men coöperating with them. We took a large number of blankets, overcoats and about a dozen guns. I cannot compliment my officers and men too highly for their gallant bearing during the whole fight, considering the bad arms with which they were supplied and their inexperience. I cannot impress too forcibly the necessity of the perfect organization of my artillery, and the forwarding at a very early day of the other gun promised. These guns are drawn by horses obtained for the occasion and are worked by volunteers. We are in want of cavalry arms and long range guns, and would be glad to have an arrangement made to mount my men. I herewith submit Surgeon N. G. West's report, and respectfully submit his name as one worthy of an appointment. He is temporarily employed by me as a surgeon. Casualties, 13 wounded.

"Your obedient servant

"TURNER ASHBY,

"HON. MR. BENJAMIN, Acting Sec. of War." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, p. 40.


After this engagement at Boliver Heights General Geary withdrew his forces into Maryland, and Harper's Ferry was again occupied by the Confederates.

This battle, insignificant though it was, developed a very important principle of warfare, which had important results in the subsequent conduct of the war. In the engagement the Confederates had one rifled gun, badly mounted, the axle of which broke down during the fight, putting the gun out of service. This incident directed Turner Ashby's attention to the importance of having under his command a battery of mounted artillery, which could be used in connection with cavalry service. He received from the Secretary of War authority to organize a company of horse artillery, and a favorable opportunity to do this came while he was in camp at Flowing Springs during the early part of November.

R. Preston Chew,—a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, and at that time only eighteen years of age,—had seen some service as a lieutenant of artillery in the western part of the State. He was a native of Jefferson County, and was at home at that time. Being eager for service under Ashby, at the latter's request he organized an artillery company with a membership of thirty-



three men. The following were the officers: R. Preston Chew, Captain; Milton Rouse, First Lieutenant; J. W. McCarty, Second Lieutenant and James W. Thompson, Second Lieutenant. Three of these men were recent graduates of the Virginia Military Institute, and were in vigorous manhood. At Colonel Ashby's suggestion all the men were mounted and three guns (one, the noted "Blakely") were used in the service of the company. The subsequent work of this company of mounted artillery, known as "Chew's Battery" will be referred to frequently in connection with the work of Ashby. It became famous in the records of the war, and rendered a service that was not only conspicuous but most efficient. The organization of the company changed as the war progressed. Lieutenants McCarty and Rouse resigned and joined the cavalry service, where they served with distinction; James H. Williams and J. W. Carter were elected lieutenants; Captain Chew was promoted to the rank of colonel, and given command of Stuart's Horse Artillery; Thompson became the captain of the company, rising later to the rank of major, and was killed at Highbridge on the 6th of April, 1865, after having served with great gallantry and distinction during the four years of war. Chew's Battery



became the right arm of Ashby, as Ashby was of Jackson, and as Jackson was of Lee.

After breaking camp at Flowing Spring, Ashby went into camp at Martinsburg for the winter months. The weather was extremely cold, but the men were kept in daily employment on scout work and guard duty. The outposts extended from Harper's Ferry to Bath,—in Morgan County,—and as far as Hanging Rock, in Hampshire County. It has been stated that Ashby frequently covered these distances on visits to his outposts.

## CHAPTER IX

### STONEWALL JACKSON RETURNS TO THE VALLEY

**A**FTER the battle of Manassas there was almost a complete suspension of active operations. The Federal armies withdrew across the Potomac, leaving only small bodies on outpost duty on the Virginia side of the river. The Federal authorities were not, however, inactive, but were busy forging the weapon and preparing the machine for the work of subjugation. Gen. George B. McClellan,—recognized as a great organizer,—had been placed in command of the Federal forces. He not only assembled the men that had entered the service, but he organized them into regiments, brigades, divisions, and corps under proper officers. The commissary and quartermaster departments were thoroughly equipped for efficient service, while arms, ammunition, and all military supplies were got together for the use of the armies in the field.

While the Federals were making these gigantic preparations, the Confederate Government was taking the situation with more complacency. The army at Manassas was in winter quarters, watch-

ing for an advance which was not made. During this time the force at Manassas was not materially strengthened, nor was the Government making vigorous efforts to arm, uniform, and equip the men in the field for the most efficient service. None fretted more under the idleness of camp life than did Stonewall Jackson; hence it was a happy moment when he received orders to proceed to the command of the Shenandoah Valley District, which at that time embraced all the northern counties of the State extending from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Alleghanies. This assignment came on the 4th of November, and Jackson proceeded at once to Winchester which he established as the headquarters of his command. There was only one regret associated with the assignment. It separated him from the Stonewall Brigade, which was left at Manassas. Jackson dearly loved the men of the Stonewall Brigade, and was deeply pained to be separated from them. When the time came to say good-by to his troops the scene was pathetic. He rode up before the five regiments drawn in line and said:

"I am not here to make a speech, but simply to say farewell. I first met you at Harper's Ferry at the commencement of the war, and I cannot take leave of you without giving expression

to my admiration of your conduct from that day to this, whether on the march, in the bivouac, or on the bloody plains of Manassas, where you gained the well-deserved reputation of having decided the fate of battle." . . . "In the Army of the Shenandoah you were the First Brigade. In the Army of the Potomac you were the First Brigade. In the Second Corps of the army you are the First Brigade. You are the First Brigade in the affections of your general, and I hope by your future deeds and bearing you will be handed down to posterity as the First Brigade in this our second War of Independence. Farewell!"<sup>1</sup>

When Jackson found himself back in the valley Indian summer was sending its glorious breezes over the beautiful landscape, and all nature seemed at peace. The autumn was quiet, and the farmer was busy gathering in his crops without the disturbances of war. Military operations,—with the exception of raids and scouting parties,—had quieted down along the Potomac. The small engagement between Ashby and Geary at Boliver Heights in October was about the only affair that had taken place during the Fall months. Jackson found a number of militia and cavalry around Winchester, and he proceeded to arm and drill

<sup>1</sup> Henderson.

these men for more active service. One of the first steps he took was to send for Ashby so as to learn the exact situation of the Federal troops and the conditions that confronted him. Ashby, it is stated, returned from the interview much delighted at the meeting with his old friend.

Jackson's return to Winchester brought him much satisfaction. He had many friends and admirers in the delightful old Virginia town, which is located in one of the most picturesque and fertile sections of the Valley. Settled as far back as 1740, by the people who came across the Blue Ridge from eastern Virginia, Winchester had a population noted for its refinement, culture, and patriotism. From Colonial times it had occupied an influential position among the towns of the State, and was noted for its hospitable and high-bred citizenship. During the French and Indian Wars Old Fort Loudon was situated on a high hill in the suburbs of the town, overlooking the country for miles around. The ridges of the Blue Ridge and of the Alleghanies can be seen standing out above the Valley in the distance, marking the border lines of the fertile valley enclosed within. It was near Winchester that Lord Fairfax first settled on the large grant of land inherited from Lord Culpeper, his mother's brother. Greenway Court,

the old home of Fairfax, is only some twelve miles distant from Winchester, which as early as 1747 became the county seat of Frederick County, then one of the border counties of the new empire in the Colony of Virginia. The country around Winchester is filled with historic association, and its people are the descendants of old Colonial families, who pride themselves on their patriotic ancestry.

Mrs. Jackson joined her distinguished husband after his return to Winchester, and during the next few months contributed to his domestic happiness. He was too busily engaged in his military duties to enjoy the social life about him, but he found in the religious life of Winchester that comfort which his earnest and devout nature seemed to require.

About the middle of November the Stonewall Brigade was sent from Manassas to join its old commander. This brought great satisfaction to Jackson; and he was never again separated from his old command until removed by the hand of death, at Chancellorsville, May, 1863. Jackson and the Stonewall Brigade were united by bonds of union, which time can never break. They share a common glory,—a glory that is imperishable. The Tenth Legion of Cæsar and the Old Guard of Napoleon have no more deathless re-

noun than Stonewall Jackson and the Stonewall Brigade.

While Jackson was busy during the fall months, reorganizing and disciplining the men under him, Turner Ashby was also busy on outpost duty along the Potomac. He had the entrée into the social life of the Valley, and when the opportunity was presented he accepted the hospitality of many of the old families. Among his warmest friends was Col. Alexander R. Boteler, a native of Jefferson County, and at that time a member of the Confederate Congress from his District. Colonel Boteler lived near Shepherdstown, and his hospitable home was open to Ashby and his friends. It was during this time that Colonel Boteler wrote the following letter.

“CHARLESTOWN, JEFFERSON COUNTY, VA.

“October 24th, 1861.

“HON. R. M. T. HUNTER,

“Secretary of State.

“Dear Sir:

“In consequence of my absence from home it was only last night that I had the honor to receive your letter, and exceedingly regret there is a misconception of our wishes at the War Department in reference to Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby's



promotion. Our main object in asking that he be advanced to a full colonelcy is that he may thereby be enabled to organize under him an additional force of several hundred young men who are anxious to be attached to his command, but will not volunteer under another colonel. If they organize now under Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby, they will constitute a portion of Colonel McDonald's regiment, and although Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby is at present detached from Colonel McDonald's regiment, he is under his orders, and the young men I speak of wish to be assured that Ashby alone shall command their regiment. The condition of our border is becoming more alarming every day. No night passes without some infamous outrage upon our loyal citizens. Ashby's force is too small to prevent these things, but if he be made a colonel, and those he has with him now be reënforced by volunteers ready to rally to his regiment, I promise you that a better state of things will exist up here. I am reluctant to make suggestions to those who are so much better qualified to conduct affairs, but I think it will not be presumptuous in me to say that it would also be well to make Ashby provost-marshal for the river counties of Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan. These counties are infested with trait-

ors; they cannot be controlled nor guarded against unless some one be invested with authority to deal with them as they deserve. They defy all authority now, and are in daily communication with the enemy, as we have every reason to believe. The enemy along the canal has been reënforced, and yesterday I noticed them building a raft or boat at dam No. 4, and also that coal continues to be sent down the canal. I have just written to the Secretary of War, and hope that you will favor us with your good offices in securing the full colonelcy for Ashby. A part of his present force is militia, and they are commanded by full colonels, who rank Ashby, which makes some difficulty always, and which was the source of serious trouble to Ashby in his fight at Harper's Ferry and Boliver Heights on Wednesday last, which I myself had occasion to notice there.

"I am most respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"A. R. BOTELER."

It has been stated that when the Seventh Virginia Cavalry returned to Winchester from its march to Manassas and to Staunton that Colonel McDonald with eight companies, was ordered to go to Romney and protect the County of Hamp-

shire from the Federal invasion, and that the remaining companies of the regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Ashby, were assigned to duty in the Valley counties on the border of the Potomac. Colonel McDonald was placed in command of two regiments of militia, which had been raised in that section of Virginia, in addition to the eight companies of the Seventh.

At Romney Colonel McDonald was attempting to hold back the advance of the Federals, and he successfully held his position against large odds until late in the fall months, when he was forced to retire to Winchester. He had grown very feeble in health because of exposure in camp, so that he was often unable to mount his horse on account of attacks of rheumatism. Realizing his physical condition and that the service required a more active commander, he asked to be relieved of duty in the field. He was then placed in command of Winchester until that place was evacuated in March, 1862. The gallant old soldier very magnanimously turned over his command to Turner Ashby, who then became the Colonel of the Seventh. It was no doubt this circumstance which in part called for the letter from Colonel Boteler.

Turner Ashby made no move to displace his

old commander, and the warm friendship between the two men was never disturbed. If Colonel McDonald had any feeling of mortification in being succeeded by a younger and more active man, he never gave expression to it. He was too noble in spirit and too patriotic in duty to cherish small sentiments. He recognized that because of age and infirm health he had been disqualified for the active duties of cavalry service, and at his own request was retired from the hardships of the field.

During the fall months Turner Ashby was initiated into the Masonic order at Martinsburg. He was probably induced to join the Masonic fraternity through his love for the principles of the order that during the war exercised over the men in the army a wide influence for good. He was a great lover of his fellow man, and though engaged in a bloody warfare he had it in his heart to relieve human suffering as much as possible. War with him was a serious business, in which success depended upon the sacrifice of human life and the infliction of great suffering; but at no time did he forget the humane side of the soldier's life. By nature he was social and gentle. Though reticent in speech and given to few words, he enjoyed companionship, and at the mess table

or on the scout he was always pleasant and agreeable. His gentle attentions to the wounded and sick of his command were noticed by his men, and added to the strong affection they bore him. Though his duties were very hard he was unselfish in their discharge and did not impose them on others. He had great powers of endurance, and stood the loss of sleep and the absence of food without apparent discomfort. He was insensible to conditions of weather which often broke the spirit of many men. During his entire military service he did not lose a day from duty by reason of sickness. He, no doubt, owed much of his physical vigor to his temperate habits and outdoor life. He was all muscle, bone, and nerve, and these were dominated by a spirit that was seldom depressed, seldom unduly elated. He was exceedingly calm and gentle in his bearing, yet in the excitement of battle he was with the "forward, fierce as fire." These personal characteristics had everything to do with his success as a soldier.

Dr. Avirett, Ashby's biographer, has said:

"The fact of his riding from headquarters at Martinsburg to Winchester, returning by way of Bloomery and the adjacent picket post,—a distance of nearly seventy miles, in fourteen hours;

and on the way chasing, and killing a Federal scout belonging to a party led by the notorious Moreland, with whom he came unexpectedly in contact,—will convey some idea of the rapidity of his movements and the fatigue undergone.”

... “When not anticipating any incidents beyond ordinary, he usually went along in a sweeping trot,—avoiding hard, macadamized roads, to spare his horse’s feet,—sometimes attended by two or three troopers, at other times alone.”

Again he says:

“With many people there is still a disposition to associate with Ashby so much of the popular hero, as delineated by the novelist,—so marked a tendency, even within five years of his death, to treat him and his deeds as mere myths,—that the writer feels compelled to dissipate such impressions by bringing Ashby before the eye just as he was, in camp, on the scout, around the camp fire, and at the mess table. To make a life picture of the man: he usually dressed in a plain suit of gray, unadorned by any badge of rank; his jacket was loose fitting and a little longer than is usually worn; his plain gray pantaloons were covered well up the thigh by a serviceable pair of boots; his hat was of soft black felt, with moderate brim, occasionally changed for a cap of Con-

federate gray cloth; add a pair of long buckskin gauntlets, and you have his outfit,—except the trusty sabre, pistol, and bowie-knife, all fastened to the same belt, and a pair of well-polished steel spurs of Berlin make.”

As soon as Stonewall Jackson reached Winchester and took command of the Valley Army he began in the most vigorous way the organization of the troops he found there. He had been promoted to the rank of major-general, and had been given an independent command, which increased his authority and responsibility. It now devolved upon him to make good and to inaugurate those movements of an aggressive campaign that he had advocated so earnestly after the battle of Manassas. His first work was devoted to the organization of the weapon he was to use against the enemy. He found at Winchester a number of raw troops, inadequately armed, poorly uniformed, and without proper discipline. At this time he had numerous requests from men who desired to serve on his staff and in other positions of responsibility. Jackson was always most careful in the selection of his subordinates, and was possessed of some of the genius of Napoleon for recognizing capacity and for making wise selections. What he most wanted in his subordinates

was industry, the habit of early rising, and the power to command the tongue. He believed that reticence was the most important gift of an officer. He was little given to talking of military matters, and he required those around him to say as little as possible about the affairs of the army.

Jackson had not been long in command at Winchester when he asked for additional troops; having in view at the time the invasion of West Virginia as far as the Ohio River. It was his wish to drive the Federals out of that territory and, if possible, draw into the service of the Confederacy a large number of recruits from that section. He proposed to the War Department to recapture Romney, and from that point to push westward along the lines of the Northwestern Pike and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. In accordance with his request, General Loring, with his command, joined him on January 1, 1862.

Before Loring's arrival Jackson had undertaken the destruction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. With two companies of the Stonewall Brigade and the cavalry under Ashby, he crossed the Potomac and partially destroyed Dam No. 5. He found this an arduous piece of work, as the canal was guarded by strong forces of the enemy. The canal was of great importance to the Fed-



eral Government on account of the large supplies of coal that were carried by it to Washington. Traffic over it was frequently interrupted during the progress of the war.

On the 1st of January Jackson had assembled a force of 9000 men at Winchester, and though it was the dead of winter and the armies were in winter quarters, he began his march toward the Potomac. With the cavalry under Ashby in the advance, he marched in the direction of Bath and Hancock on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, where there were Federal garrisons. His purpose was to disperse this force and prevent a union with Kelly at Romney, and also to cut off communication between Banks, at Frederick, Md., and the Federal troops in West Virginia. He determined to make Kelly fight single-handed, or evacuate Romney.

When the men marched out of Winchester the weather was pleasant, and many of the men left their overcoats and blankets in the wagons. In the evening a fierce storm of snow and hail came up and the men suffered from the suddenness of the change of climate. When they went into camp the wagons had not come up, and there was neither food nor clothing to comfort the men during the night; consequently they suffered severely

as they lay shivering around the camp-fires. Jackson pushed his men as fast as the bad weather and sleety roads would permit, but it was not until the 4th of January that he reached the town of Bath. The enemy had heard of the approach of Jackson and made a hasty retreat, leaving their camp and supplies for the Confederates. Jackson had hoped to surround and capture the garrison, but in this he was disappointed. The Federals had retreated in two directions,—toward Hancock and toward Sir John's Run.

Ashby with his cavalry followed the retreating men, and when he reached Hancock he found a considerable Federal force occupying the town. When Jackson arrived with the infantry he decided to capture the place. He sent Ashby and several of his men with a flag of truce to demand its surrender. Ashby crossed the Potomac, and when he reached the Federal pickets he and his companions were blindfolded and led to headquarters. He made known to the Federal commander the object of his mission, offering him time to remove the women and children. The Federal officer in charge declined either to surrender the town or to remove the non-combatants. When Ashby reported the result of his mission to Jackson the General ordered the artillery to shell the

town; but, night coming on, the firing ceased. The following morning Jackson began his march toward Romney. As the roads were covered with sleet, the march was made with great difficulty, and the men suffered unusual hardships; but Jackson was resolute in his purpose and pushed on, with all the vigor possible, until he reached Romney. He found that the Federal force of some 10,000 men had evacuated the place, without making any sign of fight.

This campaign brought no returns to the Confederacy and cost much suffering to the men. It led to an unfortunate controversy between Jackson and some of his subordinate officers,—a controversy that came near losing Jackson to the army. General Loring's command,—which constituted nearly two-thirds of Jackson's force,—was at that time little more than a band of untrained citizens, and these men complained bitterly of Jackson's discipline and of the hardship of the march. Their dissatisfaction gave Jackson an infinite amount of trouble, for it was his purpose to push on to Cumberland and destroy the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at that place. He was forced to abandon this movement and to return to Winchester on January 24, leaving Loring in charge of Romney.

General Loring had handled his men with neither ability nor discretion. He had passed some criticisms on Jackson, which led to much personal feeling. After Jackson's return to Winchester the Secretary of War instructed him to order Loring's command back from Romney. This order Jackson resented as it had not come through General Johnston, his superior officer. Jackson considered it a reflection on his judgment and injurious in its effect upon the discipline of the troops under his command; and furthermore he believed that it had been brought about by the influence of some of Loring's subordinate officers, who had passed criticisms on his campaign to Romney,—men that were dissatisfied with their position and had reported to the War Department that Romney was of no strategic importance. Jackson complied with the order of the Secretary of War and recalled Loring to Winchester; but in the meantime he had sent his resignation by General Johnston to the Secretary of War. In this letter, dated January 31, 1862, he says:

“Your order, requiring me to direct General Loring to return with his command to Winchester immediately, has been received and promptly complied with. With such interference in my

command, I cannot expect to be of much service in the field, and accordingly respectfully request to be ordered to report for duty to the Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington, as has been done in the case of other professors. Should this application be granted, I most respectfully request that the President will accept my resignation from the army."

Jackson's resignation was not prompted by any hostility to the Secretary of War but by the motive that the Secretary's order affected the entire army and was a direct blow to military discipline. It opened to the Secretary of War an arbitrary power that would shake the authority of every officer in the Confederate army. Jackson's resignation created a great excitement in the army at the time, but it accomplished the purpose he had in view: it brought the Secretary of War to a proper understanding of his position. After much discussion Jackson was influenced to withdraw his resignation. He remained in charge of the army in the Valley, and on his return to Winchester began the campaign which established his fame in history.

After the Bath campaign Ashby returned with his cavalry to the Valley with his old commander.

The relations between the two men became closer and closer. Ashby was not only the right hand of Jackson but until his death, five months later, was his eyes and ears. During the months of January and February, while Jackson was encamped with his force around Winchester, Ashby was busy with his command guarding the Potomac from the Blue Ridge to the Alleghanies. His pickets and scouts covered many miles of territory, and his men were kept constantly in the saddle. His personal labors were very heavy, for he rode miles each day visiting his pickets and making observations of the movements of the enemy. He kept Jackson fully informed as to the position and strength of the Federals, who were now preparing to cross the Potomac. Whenever an advance was made he would attempt to repel it with the small force under him. He had a number of small engagements and, with the aid of Chew's battery, he was able to inflict much punishment on the invading forces in front of him.

Meanwhile Jackson was busy with his command, preparing for the opening of the spring campaign. His force had been reduced to less than 5000 men by the assignment of the command

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under General Loring to another field. Being fully informed of the large forces confronting him, his plans were made for the evacuation of Winchester when the necessity should arise.

## CHAPTER X

### EVACUATION OF WINCHESTER

ON February 27, 1862, General Banks, with an army of 38,000 men, crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry on a pontoon bridge, his objective point being Winchester and the Valley of Virginia. With this large force were eighty pieces of artillery and some 2000 cavalry. To oppose this force Jackson had less than 5000 men. Knowing that he was hopelessly outnumbered, his only resource was to outgeneral Banks the Federal commander. Banks was ordered to hold the lines between Charlestown and Martinsburg and not to press Jackson until McClellan was prepared to move against Manassas. He was instructed to rebuild the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and to open communication between the West and Washington.

On March 9 General Johnston evacuated Manassas and fell back to Orange Court House. This movement left Jackson in the valley unprotected from flank operations of the enemy; yet he was very reluctant to abandon Winchester as he regarded it as a place of great strategic impor-



tance, and furthermore he was much attached to the people. On March 7, and again on the 11th, he advanced toward the Federal lines, hoping to give the enemy battle. But Banks greatly overrated the strength of Jackson's force and made no effort to advance until the 12th,—after the Confederates had withdrawn from the place.

Ashby, with his cavalry, had kept up an incessant activity in front of Banks and had greatly retarded the Federal advance, giving Jackson ample time to remove his sick and wounded and all his supplies. He gradually fell back to Strasburg, eighteen miles south. Banks followed very slowly, and it was not until the 18th that Shields' division of 11,000 pushed on to Strasburg. Jackson had already taken his position at Mt. Jackson, twenty-five miles south of Strasburg, where he hoped to draw Banks after him. Ashby kept up a continuous skirmish with the advancing enemy and, with his cavalry and Chew's guns, he contested every foot of ground. It was on this retreat that Ashby first learned the lesson of fighting infantry with artillery. With the support of a few companies of cavalry, Chew would run up his guns on a hill or open ground, fire into the advancing lines of infantry or cavalry, give them a check and then, when hotly pressed, would limber

up his guns and get away to a safer position. He defied the enemy by violating the principles of war, for it was impossible for the attacking party to estimate the strength of the supporting party. It was assumed that artillery was backed up by forces of infantry, while in point of fact, only a few cavalry supported the guns. It was in this way that Jackson's retreat was protected and the advance was so slow.

Jackson quietly rested at Mt. Jackson until March 21, when Ashby reported to Jackson that the Federals were retreating to Winchester, and that one division of some 10,000 men was leaving Winchester by way of the road that led across the Blue Ridge into eastern Virginia.

Before proceeding with Jackson's movements at this point it may be profitable to consider the general movements of the Federal army under McClellan.

During the entire winter McClellan had been busy preparing for the spring campaign. He had assembled over 200,000 men in and around Washington, and had organized and disciplined this force until it had become a most efficient machine. McClellan insisted upon delay in his operations, but the pressure of the Government was so urgent that he was forced to take the field in March.

The roads were still in frightful condition, yet he ventured across the Potomac and moved in the direction of Manassas. Johnston, opposing this great army, had less than 30,000 men. His position at Manassas was weak, considering the large body attacking him, hence he fell back to the Rapidan River, with the view of drawing McClellan into the interior and away from his base of supplies. Johnston's change of base disconcerted all McClellan's plans, and the Federal general began at once to transfer all his troops to the Peninsula by water and to make an attack upon Richmond by that route. He had ordered Banks to occupy the Shenandoah Valley and hold Jackson, so that Johnston could not be reënforced. When the strength of Jackson's force was ascertained McClellan ordered the greater portion of Banks' army to leave the Valley and join his command. Johnston and McClellan were playing the same game. As soon as the army under Banks was defeated, Jackson advanced down the Valley and threatened Shields, who had about 11,000 men at Winchester. Shields' front was no sooner assailed than the division under General Williams, which was en route to join McClellan, was recalled to reënforce the Valley Army.

Ashby had learned of these movements, and

reported to Jackson the information that had come to him through his scouting parties,—information that was in some respects incorrect. He advanced with his cavalry as far as Winchester, and made an attack upon Shields; in which attack General Shields was wounded by a shell from one of Chew's guns. In the meantime Jackson had pushed as far as Newtown on the Valley Pike, where he struck the Federal outpost. From the information he had received he decided to give battle to Shields, and advanced to the village of Kernstown, some five miles south of Winchester. At one o'clock in the afternoon, after his men had been worn out by the long marches of the two previous days, he arrived on the field and began preparation for action, throwing out his force in line of battle, in which his ranks were separated by the lay of the ground.

He had first determined to postpone the attack until the following morning, but, after a study of the situation, decided upon an immediate attack. The Federals greatly outnumbered him, and also had the advantage of position, their lines extending across the Valley Pike for some distance. It was Jackson's purpose to turn the right wing of the Federal army and drive it back on ground less favorable to its movements. With two brigades

of infantry he moved on his left to attack the Federal right. He had some 2000 men, supported by three batteries of artillery, under his immediate command. On his right wing Ashby, with about 200 cavalry, and Chew's battery, held the pike and bore the brunt of the attack from the Federal left. Jackson made a vigorous assault on the Federal right and for a time pressed it heavily, but he was greatly outnumbered, and was only able to hold his ground until he could withdraw his men, without a serious rout. Ashby held the right wing by his daring charges on the advancing columns of the Federals. Though he had under his command less than 500 men all told, he deceived the enemy as to his strength and kept them at bay until Jackson could withdraw his forces on the left. Ashby and his men made a desperate fight, in which the battery under Chew rendered invaluable service, though it was necessary for Chew to change his position several times. Ashby held his ground until the Federals gave up the attack, and by holding the right flank he saved Jackson from a disastrous rout. Indeed, he virtually saved the day, and converted a defeat into a safe retreat.

Colonel Chew in speaking of the battle of Kernstown, says:

"I have always believed that his audacity (Ashby's) saved General Jackson's army from total destruction at the battle of Kernstown. Ashby moved boldly forward with his command, consisting of a few companies of cavalry and my three guns, and protecting his men from observation by woods and ravines, opened on them with artillery, and withstood from ten o'clock until dark the fire of the enemies' artillery, sometimes as many as three or four batteries. When the enemy moved forward he dashed upon and repulsed them with his cavalry. Had the enemy known our strength or not been deceived by the audacity of the movement, they could have swept forward upon the turnpike, turned Jackson's right flank, and cut off retreat by way of the turnpike. They, however, made little effort to advance, and we remained in our position until Jackson had returned to Newtown."

While Jackson was forced to withdraw from the fight, he was not followed by the enemy but went into camp at Newtown, three miles from the field. His men, completely exhausted, threw themselves down and went to sleep, in many instances too weary to eat. General Shields admitted that for a time the struggle had been doubtful, but the arrival of 3000 men on the field

saved the day for the Federals. The Federal force numbered over 9000 men, while Jackson had less than 5000 men. Although the battle was a tactical defeat for Jackson it was a strategic victory, since it accomplished what he aimed to do: recalled to the Valley a large body that was on the way to reënforce McClellan. Ashby had been misinformed by his scouts in regard to the strength of the force in Winchester, and this misinformation had led Jackson into the error of making the attack. The results of the fight fully justified the losses sustained. It was a bloody affair, as over 1200 men were killed and wounded in a battle that lasted less than five hours.

Ashby and his men spent the night at Bartonsville, one and a half miles from the battlefield.

Avirett says:

"It is doubtful whether there was a more desperate and hotly contested engagement through the whole period of the war than that of Kernstown. . . . Ashby was in his glory. Many will recall him as, mounted on his white charger, he rode at full speed, clearing every obstacle, whether post-and-rail or stone fence, or one of those ravines so common in limestone lands. Now consulting with Jackson, now riding up to Chew's Battery and ordering its intrepid, skillful boy-

captain to limber up and move with the squadron of horse just then ordered to charge. He was entirely transformed from the quiet, taciturn officer as seen in camp. The rapid and skillful maneuvering of his squadrons and battery elicited the warmest admiration, while his reckless exposure of his life and wonderful escape from death, was a theme around the camp-fire for a long time afterward. He seemed almost ubiquitous as he appeared along the line, animating the men with his peculiarly expressive 'Drive them, boys! drive them!' And they obeyed him. So well-ordered was his withdrawal from the field, that not a man nor gun was lost on that part under his immediate eye."

The work of Ashby in the battle of Kernstown had given him increased *éclat* in the eyes of his men. He had saved the army from a great disaster by his boldness and sagacity, and had shown his capacity for leadership that was fully recognized by the men who had watched his skillful management of the force under him. He was developing rapidly, not only as a fighter, but as a military commander. The eyes of the South were watching his successful career with just pride. The failure of the Bath campaign and the tactical defeat of his army at Kernstown



would have wounded the pride and spirit of a weak general. It was not so with Jackson. His courage, resourcefulness, and spirit rose higher, and he made his plans and executed his movements with greater daring and confidence. Jackson believed in himself and in his men, and though the odds were against him, he was never discouraged nor faint-hearted. He was resolute and defiant, impatiently waiting for the opportunity to show his genius.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE VALLEY CAMPAIGN OF 1862

**T**HE Valley campaign properly began with the evacuation of Winchester, soon followed by the battle of Kernstown.

The object of the campaign was twofold: first, to protect the people of the Valley counties from the invasion of the Federal armies, and second,—a purpose that was contradictory to the first,—to aim to retain in the Valley large forces of the Federal army and in this way prevent these forces from uniting with General McClellan in his attack upon Richmond. It will be seen that the first purpose was made subordinate to the second, as the Confederate army under Jackson gradually retired to the upper Valley and gave up the possession of the lower Valley to the Federals. Possibly this was made necessary by the small force assigned to Jackson for the defence of the Valley. Jackson was forced by the larger forces that were assailing him to retreat up the Valley, but he had an object in his retreat;—an object that was fully demonstrated in the progress of the campaign. His withdrawal into the interior made a larger

Federal force necessary, since it required more men to protect the lines of the advancing army and withdrew that larger number of men from the aid of McClellan.

When Banks entered the lower Valley he had under his command some 40,000 men. Just before the battle of Kernstown he was compelled to recall some 10,000 men, under General Williams, who had been sent to join McClellan. The real purpose of the fight at Kernstown was to compel the return of his force to the Valley. This was the strategic purpose of Jackson in his attack upon Shields. A tactical defeat such as he suffered was practically a Confederate victory, and it will be seen that Jackson had a definite policy which he carried out with complete success. Indeed, all his movements were based upon well-devised plans, which he conducted with singular precision. He fully understood the purpose of the enemy and the character of the Federal general. He recognized two essential principles of war: first, to make no mistakes yourself, and second, to take advantage of the mistakes of the enemy. His movements were directed with reference to these two maxims of warfare. With his small force, he knew that the only hope of success was through such manipulation of his command as would give him the ad-

vantage of flank movements and of attacking weak points. The more he could separate the forces of the Federals and place them at a disadvantage the better would he be able to carry out strategic movements that would embarrass them.

The night after the battle of Kernstown Jackson went into camp within three miles of the battle-field. Although General Shields had claimed a great victory, he made no effort to follow up the advantage, but allowed Jackson to withdraw, without the loss of his wounded and sick, and in full possession of all his army supplies. General Banks, on his way to Washington, as soon as he heard of the battle, returned and took command of the Federal army. It had been already stated that the force under Williams, which was on its way to Manassas, returned to Winchester to join Banks. The Federals had by the following day assembled an army,—estimated at some 19,000 men,—in front of Jackson, while Jackson's entire force was less than 4000 men, though estimated by the Federals at not less than 15,000. This great exaggeration of the strength of the Confederate force under Jackson led Banks and the Federal authorities at Washington into a series of blunders that worked great advantage to Jackson, since it not only retarded

the pressure of Banks' advance, but allowed Jackson a slow and safe retreat.

Jackson retired gradually up the Valley, drawing Banks after him but retarding his movements by the use of the cavalry and artillery under Ashby, which contested each mile of ground with numerous engagements with the enemy as it advanced. Banks' advance outpost did not reach Thom's Brook until the third day after the battle of Kernstown, though only 19 miles distant, and it was not until April 1 that he reached Woodstock, though he had under his command some 19,000 men,—or four times the number under Jackson. Banks was literally feeling his way by slow and gradual advances. Had he made an aggressive advance, he could have swept Jackson away from his front and gone on as far south as Staunton. His unwillingness to press Jackson was due to two causes: first, he overestimated the strength of the force under Jackson, and second, he was afraid to trust himself too far from Winchester, his base of supplies. It was necessary to cover his rear by using large forces along the line of the Valley Pike, and he was apprehensive at all times of flank attacks in his rear by the cavalry under Ashby.

The retreat up the Valley was conducted in a

masterly way. The cavalry under Ashby had been reënforced by the addition of a number of companies, so that at this time Ashby had in his command as many as 26 companies together with Chew's battery. This force he used to protect Jackson's retreat by making constant assaults upon the Federal advance. With Chew's three pieces of artillery he was able to create the impression that large forces of infantry were protecting his artillery, when, in point of fact, the guns of Chew were only protected by a few companies of cavalry. After a brisk skirmish with Ashby on April 2, Banks crossed Thom's Brook and reached the village of Edenburg. Up to this time Banks had been operating in connection with the movements of McClellan on the Peninsula.

Banks was being constantly urged by the Secretary of War to push forward his advance, and he was almost daily giving assurances of his purpose to attack Jackson, yet it was not until April 17 that he began a forward movement. Jackson fell back to a strong position on Rude's Hill, some three miles south of Mount Jackson, where he waited for the approach of Banks. At this place Jackson had the advantage of two lines of retreat: he could either retire along the Valley Pike in the direction of Staunton, or turn to his right and

cross the Massanutton at New Market, and then, by way of Luray, cross over into eastern Virginia by Culpeper Court House. Both of these plans were confusing to Banks, since they prevented him from giving a decisive blow to Jackson. The position of Banks was not an enviable one, for he was being drawn further from his supplies, and was being exposed more and more to flank attacks. The further he advanced up the Valley the greater grew the distance from his base of supplies, and the more embarrassing became his position. Jackson was playing his game of strategy with success, since he was drawing large forces from McClellan and was daily making Banks more uncertain in regard to the Confederates' movements. From the battle of Kernstown to April 16 Jackson's infantry had not been disturbed, but had quietly fallen back from one position to another while the cavalry under Ashby was in daily engagements with Banks' advance. It was, as has been described by a Federal officer (General Gordon), "a continuous season of artillery brawling and picket stalking." Ashby by his constant vigilance imposed caution upon the enemies' advance and gave Jackson time to rest his men and reorganize his regiments. "He amused himself," says Henderson, "writing letters to his wife and

admiring the scenery of the surrounding country."

His chief object was to prevent Banks from detaching troops to reinforce McClellan.

While Jackson was in camp at Rude's Hill waiting for the advance of Banks he was favored by the swollen condition of the north branch of the Shenandoah River, which could only be crossed on the bridge that spanned the pike at Mount Jackson. As Jackson wished to hold his position until the river was low enough to be forded, he ordered Ashby to guard the bridge and hold Mount Jackson as long as possible.

An incident occurred at this time which illustrates the daring of Ashby and his men. Ashby, with a small body of cavalry, was holding a position on the north bank of the river where he was resisting the advance of the Federal infantry, and being hotly pressed, was compelled to retreat; but in doing so determined to burn the bridge. Dismounting from his horse for the purpose, —having previously sent his men across to the south bank,—he was in the act of applying the match when he was run into by a troop of Federal cavalry, which pressed him so hard that he was forced to mount his horse and retreat. In the hot pursuit he and some four of



his men, who likewise had dismounted, fired into the Federals and held them back until they surrounded him. The enemy ordered Ashby to surrender, and in firing upon him wounded his horse through the lungs. He and his companions succeeded in shooting three of the four men who were in the advance, and then made their escape to the army at Rude's Hill. A few days after this affair some one congratulated Turner Ashby on his escape and asked him why he had not surrendered when surrounded by so many of the enemy. His reply was: "A man is not always called upon to surrender when in danger."<sup>1</sup>

Jackson's position at Rude's Hill was not a strong one. Both of his flanks were exposed and the force under his command was not large enough to hold Banks in his front. He had succeeded by a slow retreat in holding back the Federal advance. Banks, with a force of four times the strength of that under Jackson, had been three weeks in covering a distance of less than forty miles. Had he been aggressive and daring in his movements, the same distance could have been covered in as many days, for it was not a part of Jackson's plan to come to an engagement. His purpose was to retard the advance and to prevent Banks from send-

<sup>1</sup> Avirett.

ing any of his men to the aid of McClellan. In this purpose Jackson had accomplished what he desired. As soon as Banks began to press him at Rude's Hill, Jackson retired to Harrisonburg, which he reached on April 10. Banks followed him slowly and reached Harrisonburg on April 22. Jackson, however, had turned off from the Valley Pike and had gone into camp at Elk Run Valley, near Swift Run Gap, through which he could easily cross the Blue Ridge into eastern Virginia. Jackson had opened the way for Banks' advance to Staunton, but he understood the temper and indecision of Banks and felt assured that the Federal commander would not venture further south, with his rear exposed to attack. Jackson had completely checkmated Banks by this movement, and had left him one of two alternative courses to pursue: either to continue his advance on Staunton, or to remain at Harrisonburg. Only one of these plans was favorable: to remain in camp at Harrisonburg, which he did. Ashby and his cavalry continued to annoy Banks, for his own cavalry force was unequal to the duty of keeping the Confederate cavalry in a quiescent mood.

In the meantime Jackson,—whose infantry now had rest, and whose men were enjoying the pleas-

ures of camp life,—was busy reorganizing his force. The cavalry under Ashby had grown rapidly in numbers and was not in proper regimental form, for the men had been too busily employed for efficient organization. Many of Ashby's new recruits were green and untrained, had seen little actual service, and were constantly leaving their commands. The real work of the cavalry had been done by less than half of the men in the command.

It must be admitted that Ashby was not a strict disciplinarian, for he had not been trained in a military school, nor were his ideas of warfare those of the disciplinarian. He was a daring leader, not a commander. He relied too much on the belief that his men would follow his hazardous exploits and dashes, and those who wished to shirk duty did so to a greater extent than was for the best interests of the service. He had gathered around him a band of gallant men, who would follow him under all circumstances; his influence over these men was astounding; and the results he secured were the surprise of the army. At no time during his command of the Seventh Virginia did he ever have half of his command in one camp. Many of the companies were on detached duty and were working under their company officers.

This was in a measure necessary from the circumstances that surrounded his operations, but there were times when the entire command could have done more efficient work had it acted as a unit. This system had been the outgrowth of conditions that permitted Ashby to take over new companies and to enlarge his regiment by these new recruits. His popularity had grown so rapidly that as companies were organized they asked to be placed under Ashby. It was in this way that his regiment had been enlarged to 26 companies and a battery of artillery. The regiment had only two regimental officers,—Col. Turner Ashby and Major Funsten. The authority to raise this cavalry command had been given to Ashby by the Secretary of War, and Ashby recognized that his command was in the nature of an independent one, but he was working to the best of his ability in harmony with Jackson. Up to this time he had rendered Jackson invaluable services, having practically saved Jackson from rout at the battle of Kernstown, and during the retreat up the Valley having kept Banks at bay by retarding his movements. During this retreat up the Valley Ashby's command had been nearly doubled in numbers by the new companies added to it. He had recognized the disordered condition of his regiment and

had stated his purpose to reorganize his command at the first opportunity; but he was just then too busy annoying Banks and hiding Jackson's movements from the Federal general.

With Jackson the situation was different. He was now resting quietly at Elk Run Valley and had time to consider the condition of his troops. The first thing that arrested his attention was the want of organization of Ashby's cavalry, and he began the work of reorganization without consulting Ashby by issuing the following order:

"The Commanding General hereby orders Companies A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, of Ashby's cavalry to report to Brigadier-General Talliaferro, and to be attached to his command; the other companies of the same command will report to Brigadier-General Winder to be attached to his command. Col. Turner Ashby will command the advance-guard of the Army of the Valley when on an advance, and the rear-guard when in retreat, applying to Generals Talliaferro and Winder for troops whenever needed."

This order gave great offense to Ashby, and he immediately sent in his resignation to the War Department through General Jackson.

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Ashby expressed great indignation and claimed that General Jackson was overstepping his authority, that he, Ashby, had obtained from the War Department authority to organize his command, and that he would not submit to such treatment. Ashby's pride was deeply wounded and he presented his resignation in good faith. Jackson, recognizing the injustice of his order, withdrew it. He sent for Ashby and explained the reasons that had influenced him and asked him to withdraw his resignation, which Ashby did. The pleasant relations were restored. Ashby claimed that he had followed Jackson's move when the general sent in his resignation because the Secretary of War had sent over his head to General Loring instructions to fall back from Romney.

To better understand Jackson's position, the following letter to W. H. Taylor, A. A. G., dated May 5, 1862, will explain the situation. Jackson says:

"I so felt the importance of having the cavalry of this district more thoroughly organized, drilled, and disciplined, as to induce me to take action in the matter; but Colonel Ashby claimed I could not interfere with his organization, as he was acting under instruction of the late Secretary of War,

Mr. Benjamin. These instructions, or authority, are contained in letters written on the 21st and 22nd of February last, and authorized Colonel Ashby to raise cavalry, infantry, and heavy artillery. Copies of these letters have been forwarded to the War Department, accompanied with the endorsed communication from Colonel Ashby, and my remarks thereon. Colonel Ashby and Major Funsten are the only field officers belonging to the cavalry under Colonel Ashby. Colonel Ashby reports that there has never been any regimental organization of any part of his command. When I took steps for organizing, drilling and disciplining the cavalry both of its field officers sent in their resignations, and such was Colonel Ashby's influence over his command that I became well satisfied that if I persisted in my attempt to increase the efficiency of the cavalry it would produce the contrary effect, as the influence of Colonel Ashby, who is popular with his men, would be thrown against me. Under these circumstances I refrained from taking further action in the matter (as I was in the face of the enemy) until the War Department should have an opportunity of acting in the case."

While Jackson was resting in camp at Elk Run

Valley he had an opportunity to observe the condition of the cavalry under Ashby and, no doubt, recognized the importance of a reorganization of this branch of the service. His trained eye saw Ashby, with less than half of his men, daily contending with the large force under Banks, while the larger number of his command was scattered over the country neglectful of their duty. He failed, however, to realize the fact that these men had joined Ashby's command during the past thirty days and that Ashby had been too busy in fighting the enemy to attempt to get them in proper organization. On the impulse of the necessity,—as he saw it,—he overstepped his authority and, without doubt, unintentionally passed judgment upon Ashby,—an opinion that reflected on the pride and authority of the young cavalryman. The order removing the men from under the command of Ashby was resented not only by Ashby but by his men. They were too deeply attached to their leader to be separated from his command. A full reconciliation was brought about between the two men; for Ashby had a profound respect and admiration for Jackson, and had served him most loyally. When their differences were adjusted he continued until his death, one month later, to serve him with zeal and fidel-



ity, harboring no resentment, but resuming his command with a firm purpose to promote its efficiency. The value of his work was fully appreciated, for within a few weeks he received a commission from the War Department advancing him to the rank of brigadier-general in the Confederate States Army.

The historians of Jackson have treated this incident in a way to reflect upon the character of Ashby, simply stating that he threatened to resign, whereas in point of fact he sent in his resignation and demanded proper consideration from Jackson. He was not a man to be handled with discourtesy. Endowed with great modesty and refinement of feeling, he knew what was due a gentleman, and it was not in his nature to submit to affronts offered by Jackson or any other man. When his position was recognized he promptly resumed his duties, and all bitterness of feeling was lost. Jackson was magnanimous enough to correct his mistake, and it must be borne in mind that he was not incapable of making mistakes. He often acted on impulse, and in so acting did injustice to subordinates. This was shown in the case of General Garnett at the battle of Kernstown. Because of having ordered a retreat Garnett was removed from his command and placed

under arrest by Jackson. A trial by court martial exonerated him, however, and restored him to his command.

Jackson was by nature more of a Puritan than a Cavalier; having the spirit of intolerance rather than the gentle courtesy and forbearance of Lee and other Southern generals. With Jackson war was a merciless thing, and the spirit of compromise was not developed in his character. He spared neither himself nor his men in the discharge of duty, holding both to rigid rules of discipline, and though at all times he recognized their efficiency, he always punished their neglect of duty. It was, no doubt, this strict enforcement of discipline that won him success as a commander.

In justice both to Jackson and to Ashby it must be said that each was influenced in this matter by a sense of duty. Jackson saw that he was wrong and that his order was an improper one and not for the best interest of the service. For this reason he reversed it, not because he had fears of Ashby's resignation.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MCDOWELL CAMPAIGN

ON April 18 Jackson reached Harrisonburg and went into camp six miles east of the town. The following day he crossed the Shenandoah at Conrad's Store and went into camp in Elk Run Valley, at the base of the Blue Ridge, not far from Swift Run Gap. Banks followed him slowly, reaching Harrisonburg on the 22nd, with his cavalry, while his infantry was encamped between New Market and Harrisonburg until the 26th. He moved with such deliberation that Jackson was able to conceal his position for some days. In fact, Banks was unable to determine just where Jackson was, for Ashby, by his activity, had covered his retreat and had kept Banks in great suspense and uncertain just what to do.

Harrisonburg was about 25 miles north of Staunton, and had Banks been aggressive and bold in his movements, he could have gone unmolested to Staunton. His hesitation was fatal, since it gave Jackson time to rest and recruit his force at Elk Run Valley. Jackson knew that Banks was not enterprising, and he took advantage of

his delay at Harrisonburg to annoy him with his cavalry by threatened attacks on his rear and front. It was Jackson's plan to attack Banks in his rear if he should advance toward Staunton, but as the Federal general remained in camp at Harrisonburg, without showing any intention of advancing on Staunton, Jackson decided upon a bolder movement for better game than Banks offered him.

At this time a large Federal force under General Milroy was moving eastward towards Staunton by way of the road leading from the western portion of the State. This Federal force was opposed by the command of Gen. Edward Johnson, numbering only 2500 men. Johnson, greatly outnumbered, was retiring gradually towards Staunton, which was then threatened from two directions. It being highly important to prevent the union of Milroy and Banks at Staunton, Jackson determined to move his command to the aid of Johnson and, if possible, give a blow to Milroy,—a blow that would drive him back into the mountains of West Virginia, when he (Jackson) would be able to deal with Banks single-handed. To accomplish this plan it was necessary to keep Banks in the dark as to his own movements, and to move the command with such secrecy

and swiftness as would enable him to surprise Milroy.

Ashby, with the larger body of his cavalry, was left to annoy Banks and created the impression that Jackson was threatening an attack. On April 30 Ashby drove the Federal pickets into Harrisonburg and made such a demonstration that Banks was kept on the defensive, and so made no aggressive movement. On the afternoon of the same day Jackson broke camp in Elk Run Valley and marched up the river to Port Republic.

In the meantime a force of 8000 men, under General Ewell, had crossed the Blue Ridge and had gone into the camp that Jackson had just evacuated. Ewell was directed to hold Banks in a passive frame of mind until Jackson could make his attack on Milroy. Jackson marched his men in the direction of Staunton. The weather was rainy and the roads were in dreadful condition. When the command reached Port Republic,—which was only twelve miles south of Elk Run Valley,—Jackson went into camp for the night. He had been three days making this distance, owing to the condition of the road. On the morning of May 3 he broke camp, and instead of moving in the direction of Staunton, he changed his line of march and crossed the Blue Ridge at

Brown's Gap, from which point he moved south to Mechum's River Station, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, where cars were waiting to carry his command west to Staunton, which he reached on the 4th. Up to this time he had kept Banks in complete ignorance of his movements, and this was done so perfectly that the Federal general was quietly waiting at Harrisonburg for an attack. So well had Ashby done his work that as late as May 5 Banks still believed that Jackson was between his forces and Staunton, guarding the Valley Pike.

Jackson's sudden disappearance from the Valley, if it had been known to the Federal authorities in Washington, would have had a disturbing effect; for at that time McClellan was preparing to advance on Richmond, and Johnston had fallen back to his breastworks within a few miles of the Confederate capital. A large body of Federal troops, under General McDowell, was then at Fredericksburg, preparing to join McClellan. As it was imperative that Jackson should make his movements with great rapidity,—so as to defeat Milroy and then drive Banks north in the direction of Winchester,—he, on reaching Staunton, immediately moved to the support of Johnson, and on May 7 the two commands ran into the

Federal pickets located in a pass of Shenandoah Mountain, 18 miles from Staunton.

Milroy, with some 3700 men, took position that night in the village of McDowell, at the foot of Bull Pasture Mountain. He immediately sent in great haste for reënforcements. Fremont's command was then in the South Branch Valley and was moving to join Milroy. The morning of May 8 Jackson moved in the direction of McDowell, where he ran up against Milroy, who was in position to receive him. In the meantime the brigade of General Schenck had come to the support of Milroy. The lay of the country around McDowell was mountainous and rough. A direct attack on Milroy was difficult to make, and Jackson had to take advantage of one of his flank movements to get in the rear of the Federal commander. Discovering a rough mountain road, he, with a strong detachment of artillery and infantry, crossed Bull Pasture River and came out on the road leading from McDowell to Franklin. This movement forced Milroy to retire and establish new lines of defence.

A general engagement was brought on and after some four hours of hard fighting the Federals were repulsed and driven from the field. Milroy retired into the mountains west of him, and Jackson

made no effort to follow further than the town of Franklin. Having won a decisive victory, and having accomplished his purpose, he sent the following dispatch to Richmond:

"God blessed our arms with victory at McDowell yesterday."

During the four hours of hard fighting the casualties were very heavy. Gen. Edward Johnson was wounded, and Col. Samuel Gibbons, of the Tenth Virginia Infantry was killed. He was a most gallant young officer, a native of Page County, and a recent graduate of the Virginia Military Institute. The victory at McDowell brought great hope to the South, for at that time McClellan was pressing in front of Richmond, and conditions did not look promising.

The night after the battle Jackson and his men slept soundly in their camp on the battlefield. A small body of cavalry,—commanded by Captain Sheetz of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry,—pushed the retreating Federals for some miles, making the impression that Jackson's command was in full pursuit. Milroy had been taken completely by surprise by Jackson's sudden attack, having estimated that the strength of the Confederate force was limited to Edward Johnson's command, which, up to the time Jackson had joined him,



had been falling back to Staunton. A large Federal force had been sent to western Virginia, but this force was widely separated and failed to act in unison. Jackson was fortunate in being able to strike Milroy before aid could reach him. He broke the chain at its weakest link, and the separated forces were unable to combine against him. It was a master-stroke,—a stroke that so completely demoralized the Federal armies that they were forced to retreat to their bases of supplies nearer the railroad, from which support could come to them.

From May 9–12 Jackson's force was scattered between McDowell and Franklin, for he had followed the Federals until Milroy had escaped into the mountains beyond his reach. He then decided to return to the Valley, as he found it impossible to flank the enemy, and it was necessary to be within reach of the army defending Richmond. On the morning of May 12 his command was assembled in camp and a half-day's rest was given to the men. He took this occasion to issue the following order:

“I congratulate you on your recent victory at McDowell. I request you to unite with me in thanksgiving to Almighty God for thus having

crowned your arms with success, and in praying that He will continue to lead you on from victory to victory until our independence shall be established, and make us that people whose God is the Lord. The chaplains will hold divine service at 10 a. m., on this day, in their respective regiments."

On the afternoon of the same day the march was resumed in the direction of McDowell and on May 17 Jackson reached Mount Solon. He was now again in the Valley, half-way between Staunton and Harrisonburg, and prepared to make an advance on Banks.

During the McDowell campaign, Ashby, with the larger portion of the command, was busy watching the movements of Banks and annoying his outposts. The young Confederate colonel had succeeded in concealing Jackson's movements, and had watched the gaps in the mountains between the South Branch Valley and the Shenandoah Valley to prevent Fremont from coming to the support of Banks. Banks had previously sent the division under Shields by way of Luray and Front Royal to reënforce McClellan. This had the effect of greatly reducing his force and, as he had not been able to unite his command with that of

Milroy and Fremont, his position at Harrisonburg was not a safe one. As soon as he learned of the defeat of Milroy he retired to Strasburg. Jackson received a telegram from General Lee on May 16 urging him to press Banks as speedily as possible to try and drive him north of the Potomac, and to threaten Washington. The object of such a move was to recall the Federal troops on their way to reënforce McClellan, and so relieve the pressure on Richmond. At that time Lee had succeeded Johnston, who had been disabled by a wound received in front of Richmond. Richmond was thought to be in great danger, and any diversion of the force under McClellan would bring relief to Lee. It now devolved upon Jackson to inaugurate a campaign that would bring about this result. Lee had sent the force under Ewell to aid Jackson in this work and he had further strengthened his numbers by the addition of the command of Edward Johnson and by the brigade of General Branch from Gordonsville. Jackson now had the largest force he had ever commanded. He immediately advanced his command to New Market, and ordered Ewell to unite with him at Luray by moving north from Elk Run Valley. The cavalry under Ashby pressed Banks by way of the Valley and followed

him as far as Strasburg, giving him the impression that Jackson's entire force was in his front. Ashby left several companies in front of Banks, and then returned to New Market to join Jackson, who had reached that place. His activities had been excessive and he had kept the Federal army completely at sea as to Jackson's plans and movements.

Banks had fortified himself at Strasburg and was evidently expecting an attack in front. He had failed to consider that his flank was exposed by way of the Page Valley, since the force at Front Royal consisted of only the First Federal regiment, under Colonel Kenly. Had Banks taken a position at Winchester, he would have had the advantage over Jackson, and would have been in a position to checkmate his movements.

## CHAPTER XIII

THE VALLEY CAMPAIGN:—BATTLE OF FRONT  
ROYAL. BATTLE OF WINCHESTER. DE-  
FEAT OF BANKS.

**J**ACKSON had covered the distance from Elk Run Valley to Franklin and back to Mount Solon,—more than 200 miles,—in eighteen days, and in the meantime he had fought the battle of McDowell. His men had been worked hard, and the opportunity came for two days' rest before the beginning of the campaign that made Jackson's fame so distinguished in the history of warfare.

When he arrived at New Market on May 20, Jackson had in his command some 17,000 men, made up of his own division and the division of Ewell, with eleven batteries of artillery. The cavalry force under Ashby had been reinforced by the Second and Sixth Virginia regiments, under the command of General G. H. Steuart.

With this large independent command, Jackson was in a position to make an immediate advance. General Johnston had suggested that the attack should be made on Banks' front at Stras-

burg, but Jackson, seeing the false position Banks had taken, determined to flank him by way of Front Royal, then get in his rear at Middletown, and block his retreat from Strasburg. He had accurate information of the strength of the Federal force at Front Royal.

On May 21 Jackson broke camp at New Market and crossed the Massanutton Mountain through the gap that led direct to Luray. On the next morning Ewell, who had marched from Elk Run Valley, joined Jackson at Luray, from which point the two commands proceeded north and encamped that night on the road between Luray and Front Royal, about ten miles from the latter place. Up to that time neither Banks nor the Federal authorities in Washington had the least intimation of Jackson's position and were preparing for his advance on Strasburg by the Valley Pike. Ashby had kept such a cordon of pickets across the Valley that all Jackson's movements were concealed.

On the morning of May 23rd Jackson and his command was within ten miles of the Federal outpost at Front Royal. Neither Colonel Kenly, in charge of the force at Front Royal, nor Banks, quietly holding Strasburg, had the slightest intimation that Jackson was making a rapid ad-

vance by way of the Page Valley. The Federal picket at Front Royal was within a half-mile of the village, and as Colonel Kenly had no cavalry, he had no way of learning of the Confederate advance until his pickets were driven in.

When Jackson was within four miles of Front Royal he left the main road that led from Luray to Front Royal and crossed over to the Manor grade, which ran parallel with the Luray road. His object in doing this was to surprise the Federal pickets before the presence of his men could be discovered. That morning Col. Bradley T. Johnson,—in command of the First Maryland Confederate Regiment,—learned that the First Maryland Federal Regiment was stationed at Front Royal. He asked permission of Jackson to place his regiment in the advance when the attack should be made. The privilege was granted and when the Confederates reached the Federal pickets the Confederate Marylanders rushed on their fellow Marylanders in the Federal army. Two companies of the First Maryland Federal Regiment were on provost-marshal duty in the town, while the rest of the regiment, with two guns, were encamped on a high hill one mile north of the place.

The attack upon the guard in Front Royal was

so vigorous that it beat a retreat at once, followed closely by the Confederates under Colonel Johnson. In the meantime the force on the hill was drawn up in line of defense, and the two guns were put to work in a most vigorous way. The Confederates advanced in front and on both flanks, but Colonel Kenly held his position until he was flanked. Colonel Kenly's position was a strong one on a high hill that overlooked the country around, but it had the disadvantage of having the Shenandoah River in its rear, and was exposed to attacks from its line of retreat. Kenly made a brave resistance and put up a stubborn fight, but it soon became apparent that he was far outnumbered. He used his two guns to good advantage until three Confederate batteries were placed in commanding positions on hills a mile or two distant, which soon silenced his battery.

He stood his ground until his line of retreat was nearly cut off, when he withdrew his command in good order. In crossing the south branch of the Shenandoah he set fire to the bridge, but he was so closely pressed by the Louisiana men under General Taylor that the fire was put out and the Confederates crossed safely. The bridge across the north branch of the Shenandoah, a half



mile beyond, was also fired by the retreating Federals, and here more damage was done.

Colonel Kenly now took a position on Guard Hill, in a gap through which the Winchester Pike ran. He held this position until the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, under Colonel Flournoy, had forded the north branch and threatened his front. Kenly then retreated along the Winchester Pike, trying to hold his men in order and to repulse the attacking party; and when he reached a hill beyond the village of Cedarville he formed his men in line of battle, but the cavalry soon broke his line and threw the men into hopeless disorder. Kenly was active in trying to hold his position, but was soon cut down by a saber stroke on his head, inflicted by a cavalryman. He and more than 700 of his men were captured during the afternoon and evening. His guns and wagons also fell into the hands of the Confederates.

The fight at Cedarville was a bloody affair, for Kenly held his ground until completely surrounded.

The Confederates lost two gallant officers in the fight: Captain Baxter, of the Sixth Virginia, and Major Davis, of General Taylor's staff. The results to Jackson were brilliant. He had captured more than 700 prisoners, two guns, and

all the wagons and supplies of the First Maryland Federal Regiment. He had so completely surprised Kenly that that officer had no opportunity of sending a message to Banks at Strasburg, and Banks, when he heard of the attack on Kenly, was disposed to treat the affair as a cavalry raid, and was unwilling to break camp at Strasburg and fall back on Winchester until the morning of the 24th.

Before attacking the Federal troops at Front Royal Jackson had ordered Ashby to take his command by a back road and get in,—at Buckton Station, midway between Front Royal and Strasburg,—between Banks and Kenly. Ashby crossed the South Branch of the Shenandoah at McCoy's Ford and took the road that led along the east side of the Massanutton until Buckton was reached. When he arrived at the station in the early afternoon of the 23rd he found two companies of infantry in the depot and grounds. He made a charge on these men, but they were so thoroughly protected by the brick building,—used as a depot,—and the railroad embankment that in the first charge his men were driven back with severe loss. Captain Sheetz of Company F.,—a gallant young officer,—and Captain Fletcher of Company A., were killed in the charge.

Both these officers were very popular in the regiment, and their death was a great loss to the service. Ashby, not having Chew's battery with him, had much difficulty in capturing the Federals in the depot. Some of these men made their escape and fled in the direction of Middletown. Ashby had taken the precaution to send a detachment to cut the wires and destroy the railroad between Buckton and Strasburg and thus prevent any communication with Banks.

The Buckton fight, while costly in the loss of valuable life enabled Jackson to capture Front Royal with its garrison, and to push on in the direction of Winchester before Banks could realize the danger of his position at Strasburg. Though urgently pressed to evacuate Strasburg during the night, he held on to his position until early the following morning. On account of unfortunate delays Jackson had not been able to cut off his retreat at Middletown before all of Banks' command had passed through the place.

These delays were due to a number of conditions. Jackson had marched his men a long distance on the 23rd, had fought the battle at Front Royal, and had captured a large number of prisoners, with all their equipment and depot supplies at Front Royal. His men were widely

scattered and somewhat demoralized by the victory they had won,—especially many of the cavalry, who were running widely over the country capturing horses and booty from wagons and from sutlers who followed the army. When the advance had reached Cedarville Jackson halted for the night, with the intention of pushing on to Middletown early the following morning and block Banks' retreat. He had up to this time no accurate information as to Banks' exact position or line of action. Banks had at that time three routes open for escape. He could either fall back on Winchester by way of the Valley Pike, march westward by the road that led to the South Branch Valley, and join his forces with those of Fremont, or march east from Strasburg and attempt to cut his way through by way of Front Royal and the gap of the Blue Ridge that led to Manassas. To prevent the latter movement Jackson found it necessary to hold a large body of men at Cedarville until Banks declared his intentions. He had, however, sent a portion of his force to Middletown. When this advance had reached the Valley Pike, Banks and the larger portion of his command had already passed through Middletown and were retreating rapidly in the direction of Winchester.

Early in the morning Ashby, with a portion of his command, had been ordered to march in the direction of Strasburg and strike the Valley Pike south of Middletown. This disposition was made to prevent Banks from marching east in the direction of Front Royal. Ashby soon came up with the retreating columns of Federals on the pike and throughout the day there was a running fight between Ashby and Banks. With his command divided, Jackson pushed along the road leading from Front Royal to Winchester by way of the Valley Pike, his purpose being to overtake Banks before he could reach Winchester, and to prevent his escape to the Potomac.

The 24th of May was a busy day for both armies. The forces under Banks made a stubborn resistance at a number of points and contested the way with obstinacy. The cavalry under Ashby and G. H. Stuart was on the heels of the retreating enemy the entire day, and the work was both arduous and bloody. The work of the cavalry would have been much more successful had not many of the men,—who being recent volunteers, had not acquired the habit of strict obedience,—been carried away by their captures and spoils. In the pursuit of the Federals, wagons, horses, and other spoils fell into the

hands of these raw men, some of whom were so busy picking up the plunder that they forgot the duties of the soldier. It was impossible for their officers to keep up an effective organization, and the fruits of victory were often lost because of demoralization, and for want of men to press the retreating enemy.

In a pell-mell defeat and rout of an army and in the advance of the victors the discipline of an army is seriously impaired. Men fall by the wayside from wounds and exhaustion, others stop to pillage camps and wagons, others take advantage of the opportunity to straggle and wander away from their commands, forgetful of duty and indifferent to the final results of victory. This brilliant advance of Jackson was no exception to the general experience of war. It is remarkable how well he held his command together when one considers that his men marched long distances each day, fought numerous skirmishes, and made many captures of stores,—captures that enabled them to satisfy hunger and to clothe their bodies. Many of them were badly shod and poorly uniformed. The temptations to straggle were great, for companies were separated from regiments, and regiments from brigades. Their wagon-trains were often far behind, and the men had to live

off the country, which invited them to go to farm-houses for food.

The opportunity presented to the cavalry for capture and for deserting their commands was so great that only small bodies of men could be held to do the fighting. Ashby's twenty-six companies were split up into numerous independent commands and were assigned to different roads and positions. While the best men were following the retreating Federals, many of the more indifferent men were wandering over the country. This was an unfortunate condition, and one for which their commander was not entirely responsible, as he was forced to send away from his immediate control the greater portion of his men to gather in prisoners and captured wagons and supplies. Had it been possible to have held his entire force in one compact body, it is more than probable that Banks' entire command would have been captured.

The rout from Strasburg and Front Royal to Winchester was a complete stampede. When the Federal troops formed to resist the charge they were overwhelmed by the strength of the Confederates and were forced to fly for safety. Men, wagons, and artillery were frequently mixed in confusion and fell into the hands of the Confed-

erates. It was with difficulty that Banks reached Winchester on the night of the 24th with any of his command under control. He, however, made a stand on the Valley Pike and on the Front Royal Road several miles south of Winchester, and attempted to check the advance of the Confederate forces that were pressing him. Jackson pushed his men up to the very suburbs of the town and fought until the darkness of night prevented further action. His men were worn out with the fatigue of the day and fell asleep along the roadside wherever they happened to be. Jackson, however, was untiring and found little time for rest. This was true of all his officers. Both men and horses were jaded, for since the morning they had left New Market the entire army had traveled between 80 and 90 miles over rough roads and unbridged streams.

At seven o'clock in the morning Jackson's command was strung out from Front Royal to Cedarville, five miles north on the road that led to Winchester in one direction and to Middletown, on the Valley Pike, in the other. At Cedarville Jackson sent a portion of his command to attack Banks as he retreated from Strasburg, but when this force came within two miles of Middletown it met a body of Federals, which opposed its ad-



vance. General Stuart with the Second and Sixth Virginia Cavalry had already been sent as far north as Newtown, where they ran into Banks' wagon-train, which was in advance of his army. Banks' exact position was not known at that time. Ashby had been sent by a different road to watch Banks' movements, and about midday he struck Banks' rear-guard near Middletown and put it to rout. In the meantime the entire Federal army had passed Middletown, and it was not possible to cut off its line of retreat. Jackson had lost several hours by waiting at Cedarville to learn what Banks proposed to do, and his uncertainty lost him the opportunity to get into Banks' rear before the Federal command passed through Middletown, for the force he had sent to do this work was not strong enough to hold back the Federal retreat.

When it was clear that Banks had left Strasburg and was retreating by way of Middletown it was too late to block his retreat. It then became necessary to follow the retreating Federals and drive them into Winchester. Ashby, with his cavalry and several regiments of infantry, pushed Banks along the Valley Pike while Jackson, with the larger body of infantry, followed the road that led from Front Royal to Win-

chester. Ewell's command was in the advance, and his men,—jaded by the long march,—did not reach the suburbs of Winchester until late in the evening.

On Sunday morning, May 25, Jackson had prepared for an assault on the Federal position at Winchester. His command was deployed in such positions as to invest the town and drive the Federals out. Banks held a strong position, and his disaster of the previous day had made him desperate. He resolved to put up a stiff fight. As he was greatly outnumbered, and his men demoralized, it was only a question of time when he would be forced to retreat. As early as six o'clock the men prepared for action. Ashby, with the cavalry he could command, took the road that led to Berryville, in order to prevent a retreat of the enemy by that road. Stuart and the two regiments remained with Ewell to attack the enemy. By ten o'clock the Federals were seen flying in the direction of Martinsburg, and Winchester was again in the possession of the Confederates.

There was great rejoicing among the citizens of the town over the return of Jackson's men, not a few of whom were natives of the place. Jackson attempted to follow the retreating Fed-

erals with his infantry, but his men were too worn out to keep up with Banks' fast-retreating army, which was making its way to the Potomac. At this stage it was most unfortunate that the cavalry was not in a compact mass so as to follow up the retreat. Ashby had but a handful of faithful men with him, and he had been detached to watch the Berryville road. Stuart's men, who were with the infantry, failed to follow the enemy, and they were allowed to escape without further molestation. Jackson captured valuable stores and supplies at Winchester, as he had done at Front Royal. Arms and ammunition, horses and wagons, food and clothing, camp and hospital equipment, in addition to a large number of prisoners fell into the hands of the Confederates. The victory had been complete, and the fame of Jackson was widespread. So far he had succeeded in his plans, and in a few days had changed the entire aspect of the war. Hope now returned to the Southern heart, and the cause looked brighter than at any time since the war had opened.


Notwithstanding this brilliant victory Jackson was dissatisfied and impatient, for he had hoped to capture the entire force under Banks. In his official report he throws the responsibility for this

failure upon his cavalry. The historians of Jackson have done great injustice to Ashby and the cavalry under him by charging these men with misconduct and folly in their pursuit of Banks' retreating force. These historians fail entirely to take existing conditions into consideration, and to give Ashby's men credit for the active and heroic efforts they made to follow Banks from Strasburg to Winchester, and afterward from Winchester to Martinsburg and the Potomac.

The facts are these:

When Ashby joined Jackson on the morning of May 23 and made the attack on Buckton he had less than one-fourth of his command with him. Of his twenty-six companies no less than eighteen were on detached duty. Captain Myers, with three companies, had been left at Strasburg, in the Shenandoah Valley, in front of Banks; one company had been sent to watch the passes of the Blue Ridge, two companies had been left in Front Royal with Colonel Connor; one company had been sent to watch Strasburg, and other companies had been sent to guard the roads leading into the Valley from the South Branch Valley, where Fremont had a large army. Ashby had under his immediate charge less than 300 men, besides Chew's battery, when he struck the Val-

ley Pike at Middletown on the morning of the 24th. With these men he had kept up an active drive of Banks' retreating men, and had followed the Federals into the streets of Winchester, making numerous captures of wagons, horses, and prisoners. In the excitement of the chase, and in the success of victory, his men became separated from his command. No doubt some of them did leave with their captured horses and booty, but this was a situation that Ashby could not control. He had done valiant and efficient work and had held his men well in hand under the excitement and joy of victory. On the morning of the 25th, he was ordered to hold the pike east of Winchester, leading to Berryville. As soon as he learned that Banks had fled by the Martinsburg Pike he moved around to the west of Winchester and took possession of the road leading to Romney. With the men he could collect around him he followed Banks as far as Bunker's Hill and on to Martinsburg. Banks did not retreat by one route, but his men were scattered all over the country, hiding in woods and ravines, and making their way to the Potomac in the greatest disorder. Ashby's men became scattered, picking up prisoners here and there, and carrying them back to Winchester. It



is estimated that in this way about 3000 prisoners were secured by a mere handful of cavalry. It is manifestly unjust to hold these men responsible for the failure to capture an entire army. In point of fact, it is remarkable that they accomplished as much as they did.

Since Jackson's infantry was so worn out by hard marches that it was not able to keep up with the retreating enemy, is it just to expect less than 300 cavalry,—on jaded horses, and exhausted by loss of sleep,—to do a much larger work? It is so easy to find fault with men when all the facts are not considered. No doubt a fresh body of two or three thousand cavalry in pursuit of Banks would have picked up his entire command before it crossed the Potomac, but this body was not at hand. No doubt the fruits of a great victory were lost, but Ashby and his cavalry were no more responsible for this loss than were Jackson and his tired out infantry. A body of mounted men is expected to do more duty than the same men on foot, for it is not considered that there is a limit to the endurance of a horse; yet in point of fact, the cavalry horse has not only the weight of its rider to carry but the combined weight of saddle, arms, and clothes. Neither Ashby's men nor their horses had had any rest for days. Ashby

was often in the saddle eighteen out of twenty-four hours, and the men who followed him attempted to keep up with his pace. It was unreasonable to hold these men responsible for the escape of Banks. Avirett makes the statement that many of the horses of the men in Ashby's command were unfit for service, and that his ranks had been reduced by the absence of these men. In the cavalry service of the Confederate army each man was compelled to furnish his own horse. A horse killed, or broken down in service, was not paid for by the Government and the men were compelled to rely entirely on captured horses when their own mounts were unfit for use. In the attack on Banks many horses were captured, and the men gave perhaps more time to the care of the horses secured than to the strict line of duty. It was claimed that some of the men left for home with their captured horses and goods, and the ranks for fighting were reduced.

This was probably true in a few instances where the men's homes were near the field of action, but it has been grossly exaggerated by the historians of Jackson's life, who are so anxious to applaud Jackson's personal prowess that they often fail to give just credit to his subordinate commanders and their men. No general was

ever more loyally supported by the men under him than was Stonewall Jackson. It is not just to his well-deserved fame nor to the gallant men who followed him to cast reflections upon actions that were inseparable from the conditions that surrounded these fighters.

Much has been written by the historians of Jackson's life about the want of discipline in Ashby's cavalry. Perhaps no one recognized this fact more than did Ashby himself. He was as powerless to correct the condition as the greatest martinet from West Point would have been. From the battle of Kernstown, March 23, until his death, June 6 following, there was not a day that new men were not flocking to join Ashby's command. They came in companies, in squads, and singly,—attracted by the chivalry and daring of the man. These men brought their own horses, arms, and equipments. The majority of them were boys and men in early manhood, the sons of the best blood in Virginia. They knew nothing of the duties of the camp, of the march, or of actual fighting. It required time and hard work to train and tame these men for the duties of a military life. Ashby was too busy with the enemy to engage in the work of organization and drill. He seldom rested a day in camp, being



here to-day and somewhere else to-morrow. He relied on his trusted captains and the older men in the service to follow him, so that it was impossible to control the spirits of the new men who were constantly swelling his numbers. It should be no reflection upon his military skill and capacity for command that he failed in his short career to mold a body of men into a compact mass, subject to the will of its leader.

The strongest proof of Ashby's leadership and ability to command men was shown by the way that men flocked to his cavalry and enlisted under his flag. Had he lived longer, he no doubt would have been able to establish his position among the great cavalry leaders of the Civil War. He would have acquired the art and science of warfare by the experience of active military service, just as many of the great leaders at the close of the war rose from the lower ranks to the highest commands in both armies. It will be recalled that at the time of Ashby's death Grant was still in command of a regiment in the Western army, and had not yet shown his great military ability.

When Ashby reached Bunker's Hill he had less than fifty of his men with him. It was with this small force that he was expected to capture the entire army of Banks. The absurdity of the

criticism made by Dr. Dabney that Ashby had inaugurated an "independent enterprise" and that his men were too busy "looting" the enemy to do effective work has been repudiated and denied by many of his officers, including Colonel Chew, Dr. West, Dr. Settle, and others of equal prominence. Dr. Dabney,—who wrote a eulogy of Jackson, rather than an authentic history,—has made Jackson responsible for this statement. Other historians, copying from Dabney, have made the same unjust criticism, without going to the bottom for facts. If Ashby were guilty of such a breach of military duty, why did Jackson on the 27th of May, three days after the occurrence, send for Ashby and have his adjutant, Capt. A. S. Pendleton, hand him his commission of brigadier-general, with the remark: "I do this with great pleasure, General Ashby, hoping that as you are soon to command a brigade, the country may expect less exposure of your life?"

Is it probable that if Ashby had been leading an "independent enterprise" and his men were too busy "looting" the enemy to render efficient service he would have received his promotion, and been placed in command of all the cavalry in the Army of the Shenandoah? Ashby did not live to hear of the unjust charges

brought against him,—nor did Jackson,—but the men of his command have indignantly resented them. These men do not believe for one moment that Jackson had Ashby in his mind when he made the statement: “Never have I seen an opportunity when it was in the power of cavalry to reap a richer harvest of the fruits of victory. Had the cavalry played its part in this pursuit as well as did the four companies under Colonel Flournoy two days before in the pursuit from Front Royal, but a small portion of Banks’ army would have made its escape to the Potomac.” Jackson’s remarks, no doubt, had reference to the behavior of General Steuart, who had command of the Second and Sixth Virginia Regiments attached to Ewell’s division. Jackson had ordered General Steuart to charge the retreating enemy, and General Steuart,—a graduate of West Point and a stickler for military etiquette,—refused to obey the order because it had not come through General Ewell. Several hours later General Steuart received the order from General Ewell, and his men then did efficient work. Later General Steuart was removed from the command of the cavalry, and assigned to the infantry service. The Second and Sixth Virginia Cavalry were then placed under the command of Ashby. It has been

necessary to make this lengthy statement to disprove the injustice that Dabney and those who have copied him have done Ashby and his men.

The comparison which Jackson made between the results which Flournoy secured at Front Royal and those made by the cavalry following Banks in his retreat from Winchester are not justified by the facts, since the conditions were entirely different. For example, when Colonel Kenly retreated from his position at Front Royal he was closely followed by both the infantry and cavalry. He retreated in good order and held his command well together. When he reached a good position, about one mile north of Cedarville, he formed his men in line of battle and made a brave fight until his entire command was surrounded by the Confederates. Kenly fought like a tiger until cut down with wounds. His men were entirely outnumbered, and were forced to surrender to the odds against them. Had they run in a general stampede, each man looking after himself, they would have been scattered, and in the darkness of the night many of them would have escaped and reached Winchester. Flournoy would then have been in the same position in which the cavalry under Ashby and Steuart found themselves after Banks retreated from Winchester: his men

would have been scattered and would have employed themselves in picking up such prisoners as came within reach. It is doubtful, however, whether Flournoy would have captured half of Kenly's command since the attack had been made late in the evening and darkness would have favored those who ran away. Kenly was made of better tempered steel than was Banks. He retreated, but he did not run. Banks ran, and let his men take care of themselves. In this way he and many of his command escaped capture.

On the night of May 25, Ashby, and the few men with him, together with Chew's battery encamped at Dranesville, fifteen miles north of Winchester. Both men and horses were worn out by the work of the day. They had captured many wagons, horses, cattle, and prisoners, which had to be sent back to Winchester under guard as fast as they were secured. The following morning Ashby entered Martinsburg to find that the Federals had gone on to the Potomac leaving in the town an immense supply of goods, which fell into the hands of the Confederates. On the 27th Ashby returned to Winchester, where he received his commission of brigadier-general. Jackson remained in Winchester, sending a force of infantry to take Harper's Ferry.

The defeat of Banks and capture of Winchester gave Jackson for the time being the control of the Valley counties bordering on the Potomac. The Federals had been driven back into Maryland, and the threatened attack on Washington threw the Federal Administration into the greatest alarm and excitement. Mr. Lincoln made a prompt call on the Northern States for additional troops, and the entire North was aroused to vigorous action. The effect of Jackson's success was similar to that that had followed the defeat of McDowell at Manassas in July, 1861. The Federals brought all their force to bear upon the redemption of the lost territory, and it became evident that Jackson would not be able to hold the territory he had recovered. No one knew the danger of his position better than did Jackson himself, and he was not deceived by the success he had won. He had accomplished the purpose of his campaign, which was to draw away from the support of McClellan the large bodies of men that were moving to strengthen the Federal attack on Richmond. For the time being McClellan's operations were paralyzed. He withdrew his advance on Richmond and hesitated as to what to do next. The force,—more than 40,000 men under McDowell,—on its way to re-

inforce McClellan was recalled to the defense of Washington, and was ordered to close in around Jackson. From every direction the Federal forces were now converging on the Confederates in the Valley.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RETREAT UP THE VALLEY

ON May 28 General Winder, in command of the Stonewall Brigade had reached Boliver Heights, overlooking Harper's Ferry, which was then held by a strong Federal garrison. Winder was supported by the command of Ewell, which marched as far as Halltown, a few miles north of Charlestown. Here, on the 29th was concentrated the Valley Army, with the exception of several regiments, held at Winchester and Berryville, and the cavalry under Ashby, which was sent to Wardensville to watch the advance of the army under Fremont, who was now coming from the South Branch Valley. The Twelfth Georgia Regiment, under Colonel Connor, had been left at Front Royal to watch the gaps of the Blue Ridge leading into eastern Virginia. It was Jackson's purpose to cross the Potomac into Maryland, but he soon saw the danger of this movement, as large bodies of Federal troops were gathering in his front and on both flanks. His position each day was becoming more dangerous, but he had fully calculated his plans and was



prepared to meet the situation. General Shields, with a large force, leading the advance of McDowell's army,—which had been recalled from Fredericksburg,—was moving east of the Blue Ridge in order to get in the rear of Jackson by way of Front Royal. Fremont, with some 15,000 men, was approaching from the west by the Moorefield Road so as to close in on Jackson's line of retreat at Strasburg, while Banks' routed force had been got together and, having been reënforced, was preparing to move against Jackson's rear. Three armies,—any one of which had as many troops as Jackson's whole strength,—were busy preparing to capture the Confederate chieftain's command, or drive him out of the Valley. The Federals estimated that Jackson had a force of more than 25,000 men while his entire force was not more than 16,000; and against this small body of men more than 50,000 Federals were moving in different directions to trap him. On May 29 Jackson had more than 12,000 of his men at Halltown, which was one day's march from Winchester. On the following day nearly 14,000 men had returned to Winchester, leaving 1000 of the Stonewall Brigade still at Halltown, and about 300 cavalry on Loudon Heights.

On the afternoon of May 30 Shields' advance had reached Front Royal and had driven out the Twelfth Georgia, under Colonel Connor. Shields had marched so rapidly that Colonel Connor had scarcely time to evacuate Front Royal; as it was, his command was overtaken by the Federal cavalry two miles north of the town, at Guard Hill, where an engagement took place in which the Federal cavalry was repulsed, with a loss of a number of men. Connor fell back on Winchester.

Although General Shields was within three hours' march of Strasburg he made no advance to close in on Jackson's rear, either on the afternoon of the 30th or on the following day. He had a distance of twelve miles to cover, while Jackson was nineteen miles distant, with his men scattered along the road from Halltown to Strasburg,—a distance of about fifty miles.

On the night of May 31 Jackson, with the larger portion of his army, was at Strasburg, the Stonewall Brigade being still at Newtown, and Ashby's cavalry at Cedar Creek, opposing the advance of Fremont. While Shields was resting at Front Royal the entire day of the 31st and Fremont was being held in check at Cottontown, —three miles west of the Valley Pike,—Jackson

marched his entire force between the two armies and made an easy retreat up the Valley. He had brought with him all his wagons, supplies, and prisoners, not having lost a man in the retreat from Winchester.

On June the 1st both Shields and Fremont attempted to reach Strasburg and combine, but they found that the Army of the Valley had already escaped and was moving up the valley at a slow pace. Shields marched as far as Cedarville, and finding that Jackson had already passed Middletown, he reversed his march and moved south by the Front Royal and Luray Pike, hoping to cross the Massanutton at New Market and get in Jackson's rear. Shields and his infantry did not reach Front Royal until the night of the 30th, and they were not joined by the remainder of McDowell's command until the following day.

This probably accounts for Shields' not pushing forward to Strasburg on the morning of the 31st. The way was perfectly open to him, for when Colonel Connor evacuated Front Royal he had set fire to the depot filled with captured goods, but he did not take the precaution to destroy the bridges across both branches of the Shenandoah, thus leaving the way open to the Federal advance either to Winchester, to Middle-

town, or to Strasburg. It is also probable that Shields had not been able to locate the exact position of Fremont and was uncertain whether the two could join forces. He hesitated to put himself in front of Jackson, and allowed the Confederate general to escape from the trap set for him.

Jackson was not at all disturbed when he heard that Shields had captured Front Royal and was threatening his rear at Strasburg. Some one asked him what he proposed to do if his line of retreat were cut off. He answered: "I will fall back on Maryland for reinforcements." Cooke says that Jackson was in earnest in this, and that he would have reversed his line of march and pressed forward to Washington and Baltimore, knowing that the force in front of him, under Banks and Saxton was weak, and that the commands under McDowell and Fremont were scattered and would have difficulty in combining against him. His plan was to attack these forces in detail, and by threatening Washington so alarm the Government as to make necessary the recall of McClellan and his command from in front of Richmond. And as Jackson was bold enough to undertake the most desperate movements, we may speculate upon the results had not the way of his retreat up the valley been left open.

Jackson relied more upon moral force than upon material strength. He knew that numbers counted for little if an army were disorganized by uncertainty and hesitation. He saw that the men who were trying to trap him were afraid to close in on him and that while they were in this frame of mind he could play with their indecision and inactivity. He had audacity as well as courage, and his operations during the next thirty days showed that he had a correct understanding of the situation.

By the evening of May 31 the crisis had passed, for Jackson,—with all his wagons, prisoners, and supplies,—was safe at Strasburg. Only the command under General Winder was in any danger. Winder had marched his men that day some twenty-eight miles, and when night came he went into camp at Newtown. Ashby, with his men and a small body of infantry supported by Chew's battery, had kept Fremont in the most uncertain frame of mind, for the Federal leader greatly overestimated the strength of the force in front of him and made no effort to reach the Valley Pike and cut off the Confederates. After all the infantry had passed Strasburg, Ashby, with Chew's battery, brought up the rear and held the Federal advance in check.

Jackson had made his escape, and now leisurely retreated up the Valley. He had accomplished the purpose he had in view,—to cause the withdrawal of the large force on its way to reënforce McClellan. With less than 16,000 men under his command he had nearly 65,000 Federal troops at his heels. With Fremont and Banks following his retreat up the valley, Shields going up the Page Valley by a parallel route, and McDowell and his large reserve force at Front Royal, Jackson's position was a dangerous one; yet he was not disturbed by the numbers against him, but had made his plans to prevent the uniting of these forces so as to attack them in detail. He was playing a bold game, with the odds apparently against him, but knowing the character and temper of the men opposing him, he felt able to meet the situation. It was not his purpose to show fight until he had drawn Fremont and Shields far up the valley, away from their bases of supplies.

The situation in front of Richmond had been greatly relieved, for McClellan was struggling with climatic conditions on the Peninsula and was making no progress in his advance on the Confederate capital. Thousands of his men were sick and dying with swamp fever, and his army

was being depleted daily, while there were no reinforcements to make up his lost strength.

The approaches to Richmond were safely guarded by Lee, who was watching his opportunity to give a counter-stroke by attacking McClellan's right flank by way of the north bank of the Chickahominy. Jackson's position in the valley was relied on to aid in this movement when the proper time came. It was the purpose of this strategic scheme for Jackson to defeat the armies under Fremont and Shields, and then hasten with his command to unite with Lee and give a blow to McClellan. It will be seen later how well this plan was executed. Jackson had two distinct advantages over his opponents: first, the fact that his force was greatly overestimated by the enemy, and second, the enemy was operating in hostile territory, far removed from its bases of supplies, and with its forces separated. There could be little unity of action so long as Jackson could prevent Shields and Fremont from joining their forces.

After Jackson had passed Strasburg he was informed of the movement of Shields up the Page Valley and of the Federal general's attempt to get in his rear by the way of New Market. He promptly ordered the bridges over the south branch of the Shenandoah, near Luray, to be destroyed.

As the river was then flooded by recent rains, and as Shields had no pontoons, he found his way blocked at Luray, and was compelled to march south to Conrad's Store in order to seize the gaps in the Blue Ridge and thus block Jackson's passage into eastern Virginia. The road south of Luray was a mud pike, and as the ground was soft, Shield's march was slow and difficult. This gave Jackson ample time to retire to Harrisonburg and watch the movements of Fremont. He saw that the union of Fremont and Shields could be prevented, and he waited for the opportunity to strike Fremont and then follow this up with an attack on Shields. As Jackson held the interior line the advantage was in his favor. He had secured the bridges across the Shenandoah at points south of Conrad's Store, and in this way he had prevented Shields from joining Fremont.



## CHAPTER XV

### DEATH OF ASHBY

**G**ENERAL WINDER, with the Stonewall Brigade, passed through Strasburg about noon of June 1 and fell back to Woodstock, where he reunited with the rest of Jackson's force. Ashby had held Fremont back until all the Confederates were safe beyond Strasburg, when he fell back as far as Thom's Brook where he took position until the Federals advanced. The cavalry of Fremont followed and attempted to cut off the Confederates by a flank movement, but were driven back.

McDowell with all his force had now reached Front Royal, and Shields had begun his movement up the Page Valley. Jackson slowly retired from Woodstock to Mt. Jackson, while the cavalry under Ashby contested every mile of advance made by the Federals. The Federal cavalry, under General Bayard, made a vigorous attack upon the Confederates on June 2, and for a time had the advantage; but Ashby succeeded in rallying the men who had given away and soon drove the Federals back. Jackson encamped the night of June

2 at Red Banks, near Mt. Jackson, and the next day fell back to New Market.

On June 3, the second and sixth Virginia Cavalry, which had been under General Steuart came under Ashby's command, and he now had charge of all the cavalry in the Army of the Valley. He had reached the highest rank then attainable in the cavalry service of the Confederacy, and stood next in rank to J. E. B. Stuart, who subsequently rose to the rank of lieutenant-general,—a rank also reached before the close of the war by Hampton, Forest, Wheeler, and others. During the next three days Ashby was constantly in the saddle, and he handled his command with so great skill that the Federal advance was kept back until Jackson was out of all danger and in a position to deal decisive blows to Shields and Fremont. Henderson states that on June the 4th "the bridge over the north fork was given to the flames. Ashby, whose horse was killed under him, remained to the last; and the deep turbulent river placed an impassable obstacle between the armies. Under a deluge of rain the Federals attempted to launch their pontoons; but the boats were swept away by the rising flood, and it was not until the next morning that the bridge was made. The Confederates had thus gained twenty-four hours' respite, and con-

tact was not resumed until the sixth. Jackson,—meanwhile constructing a ferry at Mount Crawford,—had sent his sick and wounded to Staunton, thus saving them a long *détour* by Port Republic; and dispatching his stores and prisoners by a more circuitous route, had passed through Harrisonburg to Cross Keys, a clump of buildings on Mill Creek, where on the night of the 5th his infantry and artillery, with the exception of a brigade supporting the cavalry, went into bivouac.”

In this sharp encounter Ashby came near losing his life. His noble, milk-white stallion, wounded through the lungs, bore him safely out, and when Rude’s Hill was reached fell dead from exhaustion. This beautiful animal was as well known in the army as was its distinguished rider, and its death brought grief to the men in Ashby’s command. It is related that the men plucked every hair from the mane and tail of the dead horse and kept these strands as a memorial of the gallant steed.

It may be of interest to the reader to know something of Turner Ashby’s skill in horsemanship,—on the subject of which a great deal has been said and written. One of his biographers (Thomas) has characterized him as the “Centaur of the South,” innocently, no doubt, attaching as

much importance to his skill as a rider as to his ability as a soldier. There can be little doubt of the fact that Ashby was one of the most accomplished horseback riders in either army, but in this respect he differed only in degree, and not in kind, from the many men who followed him. The cavalrymen in his command were noted for their superb mounts and splendid riding. Many of the Confederate officers were well mounted and rode with grace and dignity. This was especially true of Generals Lee, Stuart, Hampton, Mosby, and a host of others. General Lee mounted on Traveler was the most distinguished-looking soldier in the army. He made no attempts at daring feats of horsemanship, for the occasion did not call for such exploits. Jackson on "Old Sorrel" presented only a homely picture, for both the horse and the rider were indifferent to the observation of those who were looking on. Jackson had hardly any grace of person, and cared little for display of any sort. He moved along on his horse at a brisk pace and was able to cover much ground in his daily rides. He was known to all his men, and his indifferent appearance on his horse was often commented on. In the case of Turner Ashby the occasion demanded the highest order of horseback exercise. He had

to cover wide distances, and in the active duties of his command his horse was a necessary part of his equipment. He had been brought up on horseback and was not only a devoted lover of the horse but also of the exercise of riding. He was a good judge of horses and would ride none but the very best. His selection of his mounts was made with reference to hard service and rapid gait. He owned two of the best horses in the army: a milk-white stallion and a coal-black stallion, resembling each other in general build, and differing in color only.

These two high-spirited and untiring animals had speed, activity, endurance, and power. They were always carefully groomed and well fed, their rider being more considerate of their comfort in the camp and on the march than he was of his own; for he would endure loss of sleep and suffer hunger himself, but he would not impose these hardships on his horses. In the long distances he often covered in twenty-four hours he would use as many horses as the occasion required. The white stallion seems to have been his favorite for he was usually mounted on him in the many engagements he had with the enemy, and the conspicuous figure he made was often noted by the Federals, thus exposing him to unnecessary risk. The black stal-

lion was a fierce and ungovernable animal, and few men other than Ashby could manage him in battle. He survived his master, but suddenly disappeared after Ashby's death. It was said that the negro man who had taken care of Ashby's horses carried him into the enemy's lines. The writer has been unable to trace the history of this horse.

Turner Ashby's distinction as a rider grew largely out of the fact that he was always superbly mounted, had a handsome outfit of bridle and saddle, and was always attired in a handsome uniform, while his pistols, sword, high top-boots, and black beard gave him the appearance of a Moorish knight; and he was so conspicuous in the saddle that few failed to remark his picturesque and unusual personality.

During the night of the 5th Ashby had slept but little. He seemed to be apprehensive of the morrow, for he realized the position of Jackson and the necessity of protecting his commander's retreating columns, which were closely pressed by the Federals. He saw that it was necessary to be on the alert and that eternal vigilance and activity would be the price of success.

When the sun rose on the morning of June the 6th he was up and at work preparing for the events of the coming day, which he seemed to realize

would be one of great importance to the cause for which he was fighting. The day was bright and all nature seemed to smile on the lovely landscape of the great valley where contending armies were trying to destroy human life in a bloody contest for victory. Ashby little knew when the morning sun had welcomed his early rise from a restless sleep that before the close of day his spirit would be at sleep free from the anxieties and cares of this life. He seemed, said one of his companions, alive with spirit and energy and restless to crown the day with his victorious efforts. He had his men well in command, and as the Federal cavalry advanced to attack his lines he was prepared to meet them. He was here, there, and everywhere, giving commands and watching the movements of the enemy, when suddenly a body of Federal cavalry made a charge from the direction of Harrisonburg upon his command, which was dismounted while their horses were grazing in a pasture. Ashby saw the approaching cavalry in time to have his men mount and without waiting for the attack, gave the order for a rapid charge, meeting the enemy with such force that it was soon driven back and a large number captured. Among the prisoners was (Sir) Percy Wyndham, the colonel commanding the First New Jersey

Cavalry, who had gone out that morning bragging that he would "bag Ashby." When the capture was wound up, Ashby found in his hands the gentle-blooded Englishman, sixty-three other prisoners and the regimental stand of colors.

This engagement was one of the most brilliant the young brigadier had ever won, for he had completely routed the Federal cavalry, driving it back on its infantry. It was perhaps the most glorious day of his life, though his last, since he had captured the braggart Wyndham,—of whose threat to "bag" him Ashby had knowledge,—thus completely turning the tables on his would-be captor and holding him a prisoner in the Confederate camp. This Wyndham claimed to be an Englishman, with the title of "Sir Percy," who had joined the Federal army for the purpose of learning something of American warfare. He seems to have been fearfully mortified by his capture, and in his own language said, "We've been smashed all to flinders."

Some two hours after the capture of Wyndham, Ashby discovered a large body of Federals moving in the direction of Harrisonburg and threatening Jackson's right flank. He applied to General Ewell for infantry to arrest this advance. Ewell sent to Ashby's support the Fifty-eighth and



Forty-fourth Virginia Regiments and the Maryland regiment commanded by Col. Bradley T. Johnson, which were at once put in position for an advance on the Federal infantry, known as the "Bucktail Rifles," commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Kane,—a most gallant officer. The Federals made a stubborn resistance and the Confederate advance was checked. Ashby, observing the disorder, rode forward and urged the men to advance, uttering his last command: "Forward, my brave men!" He was in the advance, leading the charge, when his horse fell, stricken by a bullet.

Ashby sprang to his feet and rushed forward, calling to his men to follow. He had not taken a half-dozen steps when he fell dead,—his heart pierced with a musket bullet. His death was instantaneous, and he passed from this life of ceaseless activity to a rest in eternity. His body was taken up by a horseman and borne from the field. The men made the charge he had ordered and drove the Federals back, making a capture of Colonel Kane and a number of other prisoners. This last fight was of inestimable service to Jackson and paved the way to the victory at Cross Keys, two days later, and to the defeat of Shields at Port Republic on June the 9th. Ashby had

given up his life while leading his men into action on the field of battle. The work of the last day of his life was most glorious and beneficial to the cause he was devoted to. He passed away at a time when this cause had reached the high-water mark of heroic achievement.

The fame of Jackson for all time will rest on this Valley Campaign, and no man,—apart from Jackson,—contributed more to the glory of this campaign than did Turner Ashby. His death brought great sorrow to his men and to the people of the South, but none felt this sorrow more keenly than did Jackson, whose pious but stern soul found consolation only in communion with God. When he heard of Ashby's death he went to his comrade's room and remained there alone for some time. What he did during these hours we may readily surmise. Jackson believed in the power and potency of prayer, and none can doubt that he found in this devotion the solace for a grief-stricken heart.

Ashby and Jackson differed widely in their religious practices. The former was not a member of any religious faith, but in his heart he revered and loved his Maker, seeking at all times to live up to the highest ideals of duty, and loving his fellow man, as he loved his God, with a

purity and sweetness of a nature that few men possess. During the night Jackson was admitted alone to the room in which Ashby's body was reposing, and remained some time before he left.

In sending out an order to his cavalry, Jackson said:

"Poor Ashby is dead. He fell gloriously,—one of the noblest of men and soldiers in the Confederate army."

In his official report he wrote:

"The close relation General Ashby bore to my command for the most of the previous twelve months will justify me in saying that as a partisan officer I never knew his superior. His daring was proverbial, his powers of endurance almost incredible, his character heroic, and his sagacity almost intuitive in divining the purposes and movements of the enemy."

Ashby fell just as the sun was going down behind the mountains which form the western wall of the beautiful Valley of Virginia. He fell on the soil of Virginia, in the Valley he loved most devotedly, and in a cause he believed was most holy. He escaped the humiliation that came to many of his friends and loved ones, who lived to see that cause go down in disaster. His death was the natural result of the conditions that sur-

rounded him. It is a marvel that his life had been spared so long, for he had recklessly exposed it to danger in innumerable ways. There seemed to be a charm that protected him, for, singular to relate, he escaped wounds when his horses were killed under him and eluded capture when surrounded by the enemy. He knew nothing of the sensations of fear or suffering, and felt few of the physical wants that come of hunger, thirst, or loss of sleep. No amount of physical exercise seemed to tire him, and when his men were often overcome by want of food and sleep he was active and on the outlook for work.

When his death was announced to his command his men flocked to see the face of their loved commander. Their grief was pathetic. Many of the men wept bitterly, and perhaps many thought of the morrow, when they too would be called to join their comrade in arms across the Great Divide. His body was borne to the village of Port Republic, where it lay in state all night, surrounded by a guard of honor. Avirett says:

“All night long there was a slow current of sorrowful hearts to this spot and the heavy tramp of the men, who had so often followed him in battle, as they came to take their last, lingering look

on the beloved face now calm in the sleep of death. The sorrow of his military family was deep. Each felt that he had lost one who had honored him with friendship; and affection paid its tribute in scalding tears. His troopers would come in and take their last look at their idolized leader, and then hurry away, while through their sobs might be heard, "Noble Ashby! Gone, gone!"

The next morning, June 7, Jackson rode through the camps of his men, in order that his presence might remove some of their sorrow and encourage them to bear their loss with fortitude and heroism. There was no fighting that day, but on the next day, as Ashby's body was on its way to a temporary resting-place in Charlottesville, the battle of Cross Keys was fought with bitterness, and Fremont's men were driven back in great disorder. The following morning Jackson crossed the Shenandoah at Port Republic, and defeated the army of Shields. Thus, as we have seen, in two days he had defeated two Federal forces and driven them back to their reserves in the lower valley.

The Valley Campaign properly ends with this victory, and it is not the author's purpose to follow

the movements of Jackson further. The life of Ashby went out on the evening of June 6. On June 8 and June 9 Jackson had finished the work in which Ashby had been his right hand. The two great leaders and their noble followers had secured results that will ever rank among the great military achievements of all time. The glory of Jackson is inseparable from the glory of Ashby. Though Ashby had fallen two days before the final results of the campaign had been won, he had made them possible by his eminent service and heroic death. At Cross Keys and at Port Republic the spirit of Ashby had animated the army to deeds of patriotism,—deeds that made the great victory a vindication of the sorrow his comrades in arms had sustained in his death. Had Ashby lived two days longer, he would no doubt have shared the joy of success and the fame which came to Jackson. But who can estimate the controlling power that his death had on that great victory?

The cemetery connected with the University of Virginia was selected as the place of burial for Ashby's remains. It was located at Charlottesville, which was at that time in the possession of the Confederates. It was believed that with his body resting under the shadow of the great State

University, the students of that institution would have before them the high ideals and standards of duty and patriotism for which Ashby stood. His own home, near Markham, was then in the hands of the Federals, and his mother and sisters were living in Stafford County, which was also at that time within the Federal lines. The selection of the University was eminently appropriate; but his friends and relatives felt that a permanent burial should be made in the Valley of Virginia, which he so loved and in which his military renown was made. General Jackson before his death had expressed the idea that both Richard and Turner should be buried at Winchester, and had he lived until the close of the war, doubtless he would have been the moving spirit in bringing about this situation. In 1866 the patriotic women of Winchester and of the Valley organized a movement to establish a Confederate cemetery at Winchester for the remains of the hundreds of Confederate dead sleeping in graves scattered over a large section of Frederick County. These women sought and obtained permission from the family of Ashby to remove his body and that of his brother Richard to this consecrated spot,—which was subsequently done, as will appear later in this book.

On June the 7th, the body of Ashby, under an

escort of his old company and some of his nearest friends, was carried to Waynesboro, where it was taken by rail to Charlottesville. On the following day, while Jackson and his men were busy fighting the battle of Cross Keys, it was buried with most imposing ceremonies in the presence of the students and faculty of the University of Virginia and citizens of Charlottesville. The burial services were conducted by his friend and chaplain, the Reverend Dr. Avirett, assisted by the Reverend Mr. Norton of the Episcopal church.

Dr. Avirett in his "Life of Ashby" speaks in the following words of the occasion:

"On the way [to Charlottesville] it passed the Federal prisoners captured at Winchester, who received it with uncovered heads. Although the notice was a short one, a dense crowd had gathered in the Assembly Rooms of the University to do honor to the illustrious dead. And when the writer, assisted by the Reverend Mr. Norton, proceeded with his last, sad, beautiful offices of the Church,—as he told of the clarion voice now hushed, and the flashing eyes now closed in death, sobs burst from many breasts, and tears flowed over the bronzed cheeks of bearded men. In this hour of great affliction no human comforter could



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be found. No one could fill Ashby's place in their hearts. Sadly and tenderly his beloved form was borne by his devoted followers, and committed to our mother earth in the cemetery attached to the University."

Ashby's military services had closed surrounded by a halo of victory and renown. Jackson had accomplished his great strategy, and had saved Richmond for the time being from the hands of the Federals. The history of his great Valley Campaign will live as long as will the great mountains that enclose this region of beauty and fertility. More than fifty years have passed since Ashby gave up his life in defense of this picturesque Valley, yet his name, associated with that of Jackson and his men, is held now in as great reverence as when he and his fearless riders were making the mountains and hills echo with their muskets and cannon. His name has become a household treasure, and almost every spot is dotted with memorials of his prowess. Few of the leaders of war have left such an imprint upon a section of the country as Ashby has left upon the Valley of Virginia.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ASHBY'S CHARACTER AND ATTAINMENTS

**I**T is difficult to estimate the character and attainments of a man who has been so eulogized in poetry and in prose as has Turner Ashby. The author approaches this part of his subject with much hesitation. He will, as far as possible, let others speak, and confine his own observations on Ashby's work as a man and soldier to facts learned from his intimate friends and relatives, who knew the dashing cavalryman from early boyhood to the time of his death. Ashby lived during the heroic period of the War between the States. The Southern States in withdrawing from the Federal Union were influenced by the highest spirit of patriotism, pride, and self-respect. The people of the South felt that they had the Constitutional right to withdraw from the Union their forefathers had founded at a time when their institutions, their civilization, and their liberties were imperiled by the authorities in charge of the administration of the Government. They proposed to exercise this right peaceably, if allowed, and, if not, by a contest of

arms. When it became apparent that civil war was unavoidable they rushed to arms with a courage and heroism that knew neither the limits of prudence nor of practical wisdom. They were carried away by the spirit of chivalry and sentiment, and they entered upon the strife with neither preparation nor due regard for the practical methods of warfare and civil administration, which alone could give success. The Southern people were intoxicated with their own prowess, and they relied upon their valor and patriotism to win their battles.

This spirit was shown during the first year of the war, and no man in the Confederate army exemplified this spirit more strikingly than did Turner Ashby. *Ivanhoe* in the "Gentle and Joyous Passage of Arms at Ashby" possessed in no greater degree the spirit of true knighthood than did Turner Ashby, nor in days when "knighthood was in flower" were the heroism and courage that characterized the knights of the tournament more ably represented in knight-errantry than were they in Virginia by Turner Ashby. He possessed the spirit of the Cavalier with the chivalry of the Crusader. War to Ashby expressed the highest art of heroism. To dare, to do, to defeat the enemy were the highest accomplishments

of the soldier. Personal courage, endurance, and rapidity of motion were in his mind the chief elements of success in combat; hence he was ever on the go, ever rushing on the enemy, and ever exposing himself to danger. He was insensible to fear, and he took risks that his warmest friends characterized as unnecessary and hazardous. He was by nature a leader and not a follower, and never felt that he was at the post of duty unless he were in the front rank. He seldom commanded his men, but called on them to follow him. This grew out of the habits of his early life,—the following the hounds in the chase, or riding across the country in pursuit of pleasure.

Ashby had not enjoyed a military education, hence he was not a disciplinarian nor an organizer; neither was he a drill-master nor a martinet. Circumstances had made him the captain of a small cavalry company before the war, and with this small body of his associates and personal friends, he set a pace which the daring spirits around him tried to follow. When called to Harper's Ferry at the outbreak of the war his company was the first volunteer cavalry command to go on duty. He was at once assigned to outpost and scout duty along the Potomac,—a service that required long rides and hazardous

adventures. In the performance of this work filled the part in the drama that he was best qualified to play, and his success led to rapid advancement in the command of men. He soon attracted other daring spirits to his command, and because of his activity and courage his capacity as an officer attracted the attention of his superiors. He was soon promoted to the office of Lieutenant Colonel of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, and given command of a detached portion of his regiment.

The feeble health of the colonel of his regiment soon led to his having full command of a large body of men. In this way opportunity opened the door to a wider field of action, and gave him the exercise of an authority that stimulated his pride and excited him to greater endeavor. His character and attainments soon attracted large numbers of men to his command so that his personal following was much hampered by the new recruits whom he had no time either to train or discipline. His leadership suffered from the conditions that surrounded him and made his work more difficult. His great skill in covering the retreats of Jackson was shown in the way he handled less than half of his command and in the use he made of the artillery

tached to his command. His daring, dash, and audacity counted for more than did the number of his men. He confused the enemy by his boldness and the activity of his movements. General Shields in his official report has thus stated the facts in a very forcible way.

"He [Jackson] crosses and burns bridges after him. Ashby has infernal activity and ingenuity in this way."

And General Fremont says: "General Ashby, who up to this time (his death) had covered their retreat with admirable skill and audacity."

Ashby's reputation as a soldier will rest then on his skill, audacity, and personal courage. The way he handled his men was by leadership, rather than by direct command. He inspired the confidence of his men to so great an extent that they were willing to follow him wherever he led them, and he led them everywhere, for the odds were seldom too great to intimidate him. He had discretion with all his valor, and he never exposed his men to risks that he would not personally assume. His judgment was sound and he had, as Jackson has expressed it, "sagacity almost intuitive in defining the purposes and movements of the enemy." He was not a reckless daredevil but fought with skill and method. His

courage led him to take risks which less courageous men would have rejected, but he realized in every instance that courage was demanded to meet the necessities of the occasion.

In forming an estimate of Ashby's position as a soldier one must give careful consideration to the times and conditions that surrounded him. When the Southern States seceded from the Union and organized the Confederate Government, the South was unprepared for war. The new government had neither an army, navy, nor a civil government to oppose the powerful strength of the Federal Union. The North far outnumbered the South in population, wealth, and political power. It had an army, navy, and organized government,—a government that had established relations with the governments of the world; and the North was thus prepared to take the field and begin the war on a basis of great strength. The South had an extensive coast line and inland watercourses to defend. Without a navy to protect its harbors, and with only a volunteer army to oppose an invasion, the situation of the border States was not an enviable one. It was soon seen that the policy of the Federal Government was to invade the border States and close all the Southern ports. When Virginia

seceded from the Union and joined her sister Southern States it was realized that her soil would be largely the battle-ground of contending armies. At the opening of hostilities there were in Virginia very few volunteer companies prepared for the active duties of the field. These companies,—poorly armed, inadequately officered, and badly drilled,—were at once called into service and new volunteers were called for to aid in the State's defence. It required time to organize, arm, and uniform these men. It is surprising how rapidly this work of enlistment and organization was effected; for within less than four months these citizen soldiers were made to do effective work. The great victory at Manassas, on July 21, illustrated the fact that raw volunteers could soon be converted into efficient soldiers.

Though the troops brought into the field by the Federals were as raw and untrained as those in the Confederate service, they had the advantage in larger numbers, in better arms, and equipments, and in greater resources back of them. However, they were placed at a disadvantage in view of the fact that they were invading hostile territory and had to cover wider sections of country.

When Ashby entered the service his company



was the only Cavalry organization that was prepared in any way for immediate military duty; and this company became the nucleus of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, which grew rapidly by the additions of new companies organized after the breaking out of hostilities. As the strength of the regiment grew, Ashby's promotion followed, so that in less than six months he had reached the grade of colonel. By the time the Spring Campaign of 1862 had opened Ashby had got his regiment well under control. The men were well mounted, fitly uniformed, and well armed with weapons captured from the enemy, while numerous small engagements had given them an experience in active warfare and had enabled them to show their superiority over the Federal cavalry. It was during this time that Ashby had organized Chew's Horse Artillery, with three guns,—a command that subsequently played a part so important in the work of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry. There can be little doubt of the fact that the way Ashby used his artillery in connection with his cavalry contributed largely to his success in the Valley Campaign and in the work he later did, and his fame as an officer and as a leader of troops will largely rest upon his skill in using the two arms of the

service in the most effective way. He was the first cavalry commander to recognize the value of the horse artillery in connection with the work of the cavalry; and he had the good fortune to connect with his cavalry an artillery command so able as that of Colonel Chew, who coöperated with Ashby in every move and in every purpose. Chew, with his guns, was Ashby's right hand.

It was largely due to the way that Chew handled his guns that Ashby was able to hold the enemy in check and protect Jackson's retreat. Colonel Chew's testimony on this subject will explain the situation. He says:

"When it was necessary to delay the enemy, who were pressing after Jackson in his retreat from Winchester, where he defeated Banks, he displayed great skill and stubbornness in fighting from every hilltop. He would form a skirmish-line and open upon them with artillery, compel them to halt and form line of battle, and when their superior forces drew dangerously near to his men he would skillfully withdraw and form on the next hill. I have seen General Ashby under fire in fully a hundred battles and skirmishes, and he always appeared to be absolutely without consciousness of danger,—cool, self-possessed and

ever alert, and quick as lightning to take advantage of any mistake of the enemy. He was always vigilant and remarkably sagacious in discovering the erroneous movements on the part of the enemy. He was with our guns when we were fighting from hill to hill. Upon several occasions I suggested to him that we were lavish in the expenditure of our ammunition, but he said he believed in firing at the enemy whenever they showed their heads. He was reckless in the exposure of his person, and when he was cautioned about this replied, that an officer should always go to the front and take risks in order to keep his men up to the mark.”<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Chew also says:

“This maneuver of charging with horse artillery was often employed afterward, but was first inaugurated by Ashby in his campaign in 1862. It was said of General Lee and Stonewall Jackson that they never saw the enemy in their front that they did not want to charge them, and this disposition was fully developed in Ashby’s character. He was preeminently a fighter, and with his regiments properly organized

<sup>1</sup> Thomas, p. 125.

and officered, he would have shown himself as dangerous a foe to Federal cavalry as they were ever called upon to encounter."

Colonel Chew, who commanded the horse artillery under Ashby, before the close of the war, rose to the command of all the horse artillery under Stuart and became one of the most distinguished officers in the Confederate service. He was only twenty-two years of age at the close of the war, having been born on April 9th, 1843, in Jefferson County, W. Va. His company,—subsequently commanded by Thomson, Carter and others,—became one of the most distinguished artillery organizations in the army.

Some of the friends of Ashby took offense at the language used by Jackson in his official report of the death of Ashby, in which he employed the word "partisan officer." The word "partisan" they interpreted in a literal sense as signifying "one skillful in the command of detached troops." They held that this use of the term was a gross injustice to Ashby, who at no time was in command of detached troops, but always worked under orders from Jackson, and always loyally supported his chief. No one believes that Jackson meant to convey such an impression as his

language implies, or that he had any intention of using an offensive term. His warm friendship for Ashby had been shown in many ways, and the grief that his brother officer's death brought to him should be sufficient to remove all doubt of his sincere appreciation of Ashby's worth. Reference is here made to the matter in order that all prejudice may be removed from the minds of the old members of Ashby's command who are now living. If Ashby were a partisan, so was Stuart, so was Hampton, so was Forest, and so was even Jackson himself, for all of these men held independent commands.

Ashby's distinction and fame as a soldier rest on higher grounds than mere partisan service. One of the great secrets of his success was his originality. He knew none of the traditions of West Point, but conducted his fighting on his own plans. His methods were so unusual and daring, so contrary to precedent, that the men that opposed him could not understand his purposes. The enemy always overestimated the strength of his force and could not understand why a man, with a mere handful of men, would make daring assaults and stand up against large numbers, without support. This was the attitude he assumed at Kernstown, when,—with less than

300 men and three pieces of artillery,—he held the left wing of Shields' army at bay, and though the Federal general had nearly ten times the strength of the Confederate force, when the assault was made, Ashby boldly made a counter-charge and drove the enemy back. Chew says his "audacity" saved Jackson from utter defeat; and there can be little doubt that if Jackson had been routed, his prestige won at Manassas would have suffered greatly. In saving Jackson Ashby accomplished one of the most brilliant achievements of the war.

But it was not alone at Kernstown that Ashby rescued Jackson from great embarrassment. During his retreats up the Valley of Virginia, after Kernstown and after the defeat of Banks, Ashby, by his vigilance, activity, and hard fighting, held the enemy at bay and enabled Jackson to retire at leisure, with all his prisoners and captured goods. His stand at the bridge over the river at New Market deserves to rank among the most heroic achievements of the war; for with a mere handful of men he set fire to the bridge in the very face of the enemy and, with his horse bleeding with a death-wound, cut his way out and escaped capture and imminent death. On the day of his death he so completely covered Jack-

son's retreat that he made the battle of Cross Keys, (June 8), and Port Republic (June 9) eminent successes. In protecting Jackson's retreats Ashby rendered a distinguished service by the way in which he concealed Jackson's movements from the enemy. He established a cordon of pickets from the Blue Ridge to the North Mountain, across the main Valley and the Page Valley, which made it impossible for either Shields or Fremont to learn anything about Jackson's strength or movements. He had both Federal generals guessing, and they both greatly overestimated the strength of the Confederate force opposing them. He helped Jackson to play his game of deception, for it was Jackson's policy to conceal from his left hand what his right hand was doing. If the fame of a soldier rests upon what he accomplishes, then Ashby in his short career achieved results which entitle him to a high rank among the great commanders of men. It is true that Ashby's work was done in a small field of action, with a small body of men, and that no decisive results crowned his efforts; yet it is equally true that Leonidas with his 300 Spartans at Thermopylae, the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, and Napoleon at the Bridge of Lodi have come down through the

pages of history as greater exploits of warfare than many of the great battles that have decided the fate of armies.

Colonel Chew is perhaps the greatest living authority on the Valley Campaigns. The author can quote his opinions without hesitation, and his estimate of Ashby as a soldier and a man can be accepted as reliable.

Colonel Chew says:

"The qualities of the soldier were all blended in him, and while these qualities might have been well improved by military training, no amount of such training and education could ever make a soldier of eminence of a man who was devoid of them. Ashby easily won a brilliant reputation. He was the kind of man around whose character there was a halo of romance. He was perfectly pure and chaste in his character, gentle in his manner, and won the devotion of all who came in contact with him. He was devoted to the cause of the South, thoroughly patriotic, and was always ready to coöperate with any officer under whom he served. I do not think this splendid body of men, though gallantly led by able officers after his death, ever rendered more effective service than they did under Ashby. It has always



been my deliberate judgment that, had he lived, he would have been recognized as an officer of extraordinary skill and brilliant capacity.”<sup>2</sup>

A man's character and attainments are often best understood by his associates, by those who know his habits of thought and his acts, his temper, his disposition, and his personal characteristics. The men who knew Turner Ashby best were the men who were closest to him in camp and on the march, who ate at the same mess-table, and who heard his conversation. Such men as the Reverend Dr. J. B. Avirett,—the chaplain of Ashby's regiment and, later his biographer,—Dr. Thomas L. Settle and Dr. Nelson G. West, surgeons in his command, who were in daily association with him, have written and spoken of him in the most laudatory way. Dr. Avirett in his “Life of Ashby and his Compeers” has given a eulogy, rather than a history, of Ashby, but his admiration for the man was drawn from close association and from a generous attachment. It was but natural at the time he wrote his book,—just at the close of the war,—that he should have adopted a eulogistic style and should have pictured his subject as a hero and

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, pp. 196-7.

a cavalier. It is difficult to treat in its true light the character of any man who is able to impress those around him with deep affection and esteem. They see all the good in his nature, all the strength in his character, and overlook all the defects that are hidden behind a personality so full of magnetism as to put all personal relations upon a basis of profound sentiment and deep admiration.

Ashby had the faculty of attaching men to him. He was not only loved by his staff and the officers of his command, but the men in the ranks idolized him, made a hero of him. The modesty, gentleness, and courage of the man, his heroic spirit and untiring activity, his love of combat, and the dexterity with which he fought,—all aroused in his followers enthusiasm and loyalty. Even the men opposed to him,—the men fighting him at every point,—were not insensible to his merit and charm of character. This is shown by the following statements.

, Col. R. B. Macy, Chief of Staff of Cavalry, with General Fremont, has this to say:

“I have been in advance with my regiment most of the time from Strasburg, and the horse of General Ashby is a familiar object to us all, as

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he daily superintends the movements of Jackson's rear guard. As we see him on the outposts he affords an excellent mark for our flying artillery, as he is descried upon the hill in advance of us, seemingly never out of sight or absent from his post of duty. He is always the last man to move on, after satisfying himself as to the movements of our forces. Many and many a time on this advance I have seen the rifled piece brought to bear upon him, and the solid shot go shrieking after him, striking within a few feet of him, throwing up clouds of dust over him, or else go singing over his head, dealing destruction to his men behind him." <sup>3</sup>

In further proof of the esteem in which Ashby was held by the enemy, the following extract is taken from the book of Dr. Avirett, p. 233:

"In the last heavy skirmish of General Ashby, Lieutenant-Colonel Kane, of the Pennsylvania Bucktail Rifles, and some of his men were captured. Colonel Kane, immediately after he was taken, in conversation with Captain (afterward Colonel) Herbert, who commanded the Maryland skirmishers on that occasion, said:

<sup>3</sup> Avirett, p. 214.

“ ‘I have to-day saved the life of one of the most gallant officers in either army, General Turner Ashby; for I admire him as much as it is possible to do. His figure is familiar to me, inasmuch as I have seen it often on the skirmish-line. He was to-day within fifty yards of my skirmishers, sitting on his horse as if unconscious of his danger. I saw three of them raise their rifles to fire, but I succeeded in stopping them, and struck up the gun of the third as it went off. Ashby is too brave to die in that way.’ This is the natural admiration [the story continues] of one brave man for another, although that other may be the enemy whom he has the most reason to fear. These noble words of Colonel Kane were no less creditable to his courage than to his magnanimity. If he too had fallen, I would pay this slight tribute to his memory. Unknown to Colonel Kane, Ashby was just dead, and his first eulogy was pronounced by this generous foe.”<sup>4</sup>

Lieut.-Col. G. F. B. Henderson, C. B., of the English army, who has written a most comprehensive book, entitled “Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War,” says:

<sup>4</sup> This statement was copied by Avirett from *The Old Guard*, for August, 1866, and was written by a member of Stonewall Jackson's staff.

"The death of Ashby was a terrible blow to the Army of the Valley. From the outbreak of the war he had been employed on the Shenandoah, and from Staunton to the Potomac his was the most familiar figure in the Confederate ranks. His daring rides on his famous white charger were already the theme of song and story; and if the tale of his exploits, as told in camp and farm, sometimes bordered on the marvellous, the bare truth, stripped of all exaggeration, was sufficient in itself to make a hero. His reckless courage, his fine horsemanship, his skill in handling his command, and his powers of stimulating devotion were not the only attributes which incited admiration, but with such qualities, it is said, were united the utmost generosity and unselfishness, and a delicacy of feeling equal to a woman's. His loss came home with especial force to Jackson." <sup>5</sup>

The science of war offers but a small field for the display of genius. Its exercises are based upon experience and precedence, and from the earliest records of history to the present time there has been little development in methods of advance and retreat and in strategic movements.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. I, p. 362.

The introduction of gunpowder has changed the tactics of battle and the methods of defense. It has most probably reduced the number of wounds and deaths in battle by changing the individual combat to the general engagement, in which men are brought less closely together. The results of a battle are more frequently determined by the strategy, movements, and personal courage of the combatants than by the greater strength of one side. This was shown in the Civil War, where the Confederates were often outnumbered, when by flank movements and more daring charges they were often able to defeat the enemy. With the rapid improvement of the weapons of warfare, war will be practically reduced to short campaigns, and it will no longer be possible for nations to keep up a long contest as in the past. Results will be decisive and victory will depend upon the power of the purse. The Civil War will probably be the last great struggle the people of this nation will ever see, and it is not probable that great international wars will ever again occur among the civilized powers of the world. The war between Russia and Japan and the recent struggle between the Turks and Balkan powers teach the lesson of more peaceful solutions of international differences. The bitter

civil warfare in Mexico now in progress is more in the nature of a police riot than of an actual struggle between large bodies of men. It will wear itself out when a stable government is made possible among a half-civilized people. While the many great wars of the world have produced men of marked ability and of pronounced distinction as soldiers, these struggles have developed comparatively few men of great genius, of originality, of striking skill in planning campaigns and in making brilliant movements and combinations in battle. If we except Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Cæsar, Frederick the Great, Napoleon and Stonewall Jackson, there are but few great generals who have originated original methods of warfare. It is true that Alexander the Great, Marlborough, Wellington, Washington, Lee, and Grant were great commanders, but their methods of warfare show only the exercise of a high military art and not any great display of military genius. Genius and talent, while closely related faculties, are different gifts of mind. They may be so closely associated as to make the distinction one of degree rather than of kind. They may often be found in individuals who have had no opportunity to develop them, for, after all,—though capable of acting without training,—a

genius is a genius that works and produces exceptional results.


If Turner Ashby had the slightest trace of military genius, it was only shown in his methods of combining the use of artillery with cavalry in the Valley Campaign. This was original with him. He inaugurated the practice, and the combination of the two branches of service proved to be so effective that it was subsequently adopted by both armies. It may, however, be claimed for Ashby that he had a high order of military talent, and that his early death prevented him from reaching a much higher position in the service of his country. This should not detract from his well-deserved fame; for it is well-known that Alexander died before the fruits of his early conquests were reached, and that the power he had established had crumbled before a decade had passed. Alexander had carried the art, learning, and science of Greece to the eastern people, and had dispersed the seeds of a civilization that brought great power to the new nations which grew out of the conquests he had made. The part he played in introducing a great civilizing influence among a conquered people was the outgrowth of conditions that followed his death rather than the result of a premeditated purpose.



Alexander's own political power crumbled, and a new civilization sprang up on its ruins. Thus it is with all human endeavor: others reap the fruit of the seed sown by their predecessors. Ashby passed away in a blaze of brilliant achievement. Those who followed him fell heir to the inspiration of his useful and romantic life.

In presenting this picture of Turner Ashby as a soldier the author has tried to show that Ashby was more than a "partisan," "guerilla," or "knight-errant"; that his claims to distinction are based on higher qualities than those of courage, audacity, and untiring energy, and that he had many of the strong characteristics which make the great leader of men. If this picture is too highly colored, the author must plead in his justification the testimony he has introduced in these pages, taken from the men who were most closely associated with Ashby in his military life, and who are best able to judge of his merits.

The critical reader can be trusted to form his own judgments, for, after all, the opinions of an author are more or less biased by the mental impressions that his subject creates. All that he can ask is that just consideration be given to the times and circumstances which surrounded Ashby's short and active military life and to the



fact that his death occurred just as he was on the eve of a most rapid development of those soldierly qualifications which might have placed him in the front rank among the great military leaders of the Civil War. In his dash, daring, and audacity as a cavalry leader Ashby has been classed with such brilliant soldiers as Prince Rupert, Murat, Ney, Stuart, Forest, Sheridan, and Custer. His career was much shorter than that of any of these distinguished soldiers, but he had the same brilliant characteristics which have made these men famous in history and which gave to them an imperishable glory.

Having treated of Turner Ashby as a soldier, the author will now try to give a picture of Ashby as a man. In dealing with this part of his subject he is embarrassed by personal relations which may influence his judgment. Of the same name and of kindred blood the writer's esteem and admiration for Ashby may lead him to attach undue importance to facts of minor interest; but in showing the character of Ashby, the influences that contributed to the making of his character deserve consideration. Dr. N. G. West,—a distinguished surgeon attached to Ashby's staff during his military life,—has stated the facts in very concise terms when he says: "Before he was a

soldier Ashby was a man." In this brief statement Dr. West means to imply that Ashby possessed those manly qualities that must ever be present in the true soldier. It was these characteristics that made the sum total of his make-up in mental and moral equipment.


Turner Ashby was born and brought up in a rural country, somewhat remote from large centers of population. He enjoyed few opportunities for travel or for association with men of national distinction. His education, which was obtained from the rural schools of his community, did not cover a wide range of study; and he was neither a man of scholarship, nor had he acquired the habit of easy writing or of public speaking. His educational training was simply in keeping with that enjoyed by his companions. It took less hold on the mind than on the character of the boy. It was intended to prepare the boy for the pursuits of the country life, such as farming, mercantile business, and the usual vocations of the country.

As a man of business Turner was careful and honorable in all of his business relations, but he was not a man of large business capacity, and he accumulated little property. He seemed to have little love for money and usually spent what

he made in social pleasures and the dispensing of hospitality. The social life of that section of Virginia was free and generous. Parties, dances, the tournament, and the chase contributed to the enjoyment of the young people to a large extent while the older set was not indifferent to the pleasures of youth. Though many of the people were convivial, intemperance and immorality were held in great contempt. It was the custom to entertain in the most hospitable way, and the homes of the country side were at all times open for informal pleasures. Card parties were not infrequent, and among the young men poker was freely played. Turner Ashby was not adverse to the game, and no doubt played for small stakes; but this playing was all done in the home and in the open, and was not regarded as improper when gentlemen conducted themselves as gentlemen should. The same can be said of the habit of drinking. It was a custom in the homes of many of the best citizens to keep a decanter of whiskey or brandy on the sideboard, and the guest was invited to drink as freely as he desired; but no gentleman was expected to imbibe so freely as to come under the influence of liquor. Virginia gentlemen were not expected to become intoxicated, and the man that violated this rule of conduct

soon found that his company was not agreeable in polite society. It is probable that Turner Ashby observed all the customs of his neighbors. The statement has been made that Turner Ashby was an intemperate man, but the author has not been able to find the slightest evidence of the truthfulness of this statement. If he had the habit of drinking before the war, no one can be found who ever saw him under the influence of alcohol. After he entered the army his habits were of the most temperate character, and none of his associates has been able to discover that he ever touched alcohol either in the camp or on the march, though fatigue and the exposure to all sorts of weather might have justified its use.

As a young man Turner Ashby had all the spirit and fire of youth. He had a quick and high temper when aroused, and was prompt to resent an insult to himself or to any of his friends. He had a very high regard for womanhood, and he quickly resented any reflections upon the character of the sex, never permitting in his presence any reflection upon the chastity of woman and holding her virtue as a priceless jewel. Though he had never married, he seems to have had a great fondness for female society, and was an attentive visitor to the homes of the girls living



in his community. He had crowned girl after girl Queen of Love and Beauty at the tournament, yet he does not seem to have centered his affections on any one woman. It was currently reported after his death that he was engaged to the daughter of one of the most distinguished citizens of Fauquier County, but this fact seems to be contradicted by several circumstances. He never visited his old home at Markham after he entered the army, and it is not probable that he would have neglected the woman of his selection during that time, especially when he was frequently within a few hours' ride of his home. Men strongly in love do not usually act in this way. But the strongest testimony against his engagement he gives himself in a letter to his sister Dora after the death of Richard in which he says: "I had rather it had been myself. He was younger and had one more tie to break than I." Here he undoubtedly refers to the engagement of his brother Richard to one of the most attractive of Virginia's daughters.

Turner Ashby was by nature very retiring and unassuming. He was reticent of speech, but an attentive and courteous listener. He was genial and affable but never boisterous nor demonstrative. His gentleness was proverbial until in the

fire of combat, when he was as fierce as a lion. This fervor grew out of the romantic element in his nature,—an element that had been developed by all the traditions and habits of his early training.

As for intellect there was nothing striking about Ashby. He was a man of ideas and opinions, a careful thinker and an intelligent reasoner. Never acting on impulse, he was calm and deliberate in making up his mind as to what was best to do, then did that thing with great decision and promptness. His great strength as a soldier was in prompt decision and bold action. When he decided to do a thing he went to work with all his soul and energy to do it, letting no hesitation of judgment change his actions; for his judgment was clear and almost unfailing, and he seldom neglected to accomplish a purpose he had in view. Up to the time he entered the army Ashby was apparently a lighthearted and easy-going man, fond of the pleasures of gay life and of good-fellowship. However, he had scarcely reached Harper's Ferry before a change came over his habits and disposition. He seemed to have awakened to the great responsibility of the occasion, and to have thrown a new spirit into his life's work. He was no longer the joyful young

man, following the hounds across the hills of his native home, but a man of deep affairs and weighty responsibilities. All the heroism and moral force of his nature seemed to have come to the front, and he was another character. After the death of Richard the spiritual nature in him became a powerful impelling force; for his grief had touched the cords of his heart, and he buried his sorrow in a strenuous activity that knew no limitations. Great moral influences often change the habits and purposes of men. Paul on his way to Damascus had a "heavenly vision," and the world was made to see and feel the influence of his great inspiration. Just so, Richard Ashby's death kindled in the heart of Turner the inspiration that was the very foundation of his heroic nature. No crusader was ever more under the influence of the spirit of the Cross than Ashby was under the spirit of the Southern cause. All the patriotism in his soul was aroused, all the energy of his nature was stimulated, and he went into battle, like the knight of old, with his loins girded with the "Sword of the Lord." His religious sentiments were aroused, but there was no outward expression of religious cant. Ashby was not a member of any religious organization. If he had any bias it was for the Episcopal church,



in the teachings of which he had been brought up. He is said to have had a deep religious feeling and a comforting belief in the goodness and justice of God. He had great respect for all religious influences, and recognized their value to society. Before he entered the army it is not probable that he gave much thought to religious matters so far as they personally concerned him; and during the war he was too much absorbed in his military duties to give any outward expression to his religious views. He had none of the piety of Stonewall Jackson, but he had as much purity, meekness, and forgiveness of soul as had the great leader.

Some of his personal characteristics are deserving of notice. He was exceedingly pure in thought and language; never being known even by intimates to have used language which could not be repeated in the presence of ladies. He did not use tobacco nor strong drinks, and was temperate in all his habits; never used profane language nor vulgar expressions; never told anecdotes nor stories; made no references to his own exploits, and modestly shrank from the demonstrations his men often made when he appeared before them. His modesty may be illustrated by an in-

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cident told by Major Goldsborough, of the Maryland line. He says:

"The column was moving along the turnpike, when a swarthy Confederate officer, with long black beard, approached. 'Come, boys,' I said, 'yonder comes Ashby; let's give him a welcome.' And hearty cheers for Ashby ran along the line. As the officer passed me, he drew rein and remarked: 'Major, you have made a mistake. I am Major John Shack Green, of the Sixth Virginia Cavalry,—cousin of General Ashby.' We both laughed and the Major rode on." <sup>1</sup>

"The next day I saw Ashby, and laughingly told him of the mistake. He jocularly remarked, 'Never mind, Major, the cheers were given a very gallant officer.'" <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Major Green, afterward Col. John Shack Green, was an own cousin of Turner Ashby and so closely resembled him that one was often mistaken for the other. Colonel Green won great distinction, and lived until the close of the war.

<sup>2</sup> Avirett, p. 212.

## CHAPTER XVII

### REINTERMENT OF ASHBY'S REMAINS IN STONE- WALL CEMETERY

**D**URING the spring of 1866 the patriotic women of Winchester organized a memorial association for the purpose of collecting and reintering the bodies of the Southern soldiers who had lost their lives in the Confederate service, and whose remains were scattered in various places in the Valley of Virginia. Many of these soldiers had been buried on the battle-fields, and slept in unknown graves; others lay in private burying-grounds, their graves marked merely with perishable headstones, and a few had been taken to their homes for burial with their loved ones.

During the four years of strife the Valley of Virginia,—from the Potomac to the head waters of the James,—was one great battle-ground and camp of contending armies, and thousands of men on both sides gave up their lives in camps, hospitals, private homes, and on the field of battle. The bodies of these dead were everywhere, and the bones of some still lay bleaching in the hidden places where they had fallen.

During the summer and fall of 1865 the Federal Government was busy collecting the bodies of the Federal troops buried in many places; and they had these bodies reinterred in a beautiful cemetery at Winchester. The Federal Government was liberal with its money in doing this work. The women of Winchester, however, had to collect funds from various sources; yet, with a courage and unselfishness seldom found, they went to work, and by the fall of 1866 the Confederate cemetery was ready for dedication. The ground selected was a beautiful plateau adjoining Mount Hebron Cemetery, in the eastern suburbs of the town. The land was high, dry, and smooth, and commanded a wide view of the valley and the Blue Ridge Mountains that towered in the distance. The cemetery was arranged in squares with walks, and one square was assigned to the State for the burial of its dead. Every State in the South was represented.

In the center of the cemetery a large circle, with a mound rising some feet above the level, was reserved for the unknown dead, and in this mound at the time of the dedication of the cemetery slept 815 unknown and unrecorded Confederate soldiers. In later years, above the center of the mound was placed a handsome marble shaft, in-

scribed to the men that sleep beneath it. This mound will no doubt last as long as the tumulus erected by the Greeks to the memory of the men who died at Marathon, or the great mound at Waterloo. It is a shrine to which patriotism will ever pay its honor; for the graves of the men who gave their lives in the great struggle between the North and the South will forever be held sacred by coming generations. The differences that led these men to sacrifice their lives have been settled by the blood they shed in defense of principles they believed to be holy and just. Coming generations will not question the fidelity of these defenders, but will cherish their ashes as emblems of lofty patriotism and unselfish heroism.

The cemetery to the Southern soldier at Winchester was dedicated on the 25th day of October, 1866, under the name of Stonewall Cemetery. The occasion of the dedication will long be remembered by the generation that took part in it. It was so great an outpouring of lofty sentiment and reverent devotion to the Lost Cause that it will always live in the history of the South.

It has already been noted that at the time of Ashby's death the Cemetery connected with the University of Virginia was deemed the most appropriate place for his body, although it was not

even then regarded as a permanent spot for his ashes. His relatives and friends felt that when peace was declared his body and that of his brother Richard should sleep together in the Shenandoah Valley, in which they had given their lives, and where they had won their renown.

When the Stonewall Cemetery was ready for dedication the Ladies' Memorial Association of the Valley, asked and obtained permission from the family of the Ashby brothers to remove their remains to Winchester. A lot was selected opposite to the mound to the Unknown Dead, and in this spot, overlooking the famous Gap in the Blue Ridge that bears their name, the Ashby brothers now sleep.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doctor Avirett, in his account of the origin of the name of Ashby's Gap, has fallen into an error which should be corrected. Ashby's Gap was named after Col. John Ashby, of Colonial fame, who was born in Fauquier County in 1707, the oldest son of Capt. Thomas Ashby. John Ashby I removed over into the Shenandoah Valley about 1740 and located on the Shenandoah River, at the foot of the gap in the mountain to which he gave his name. The ferry across the river was first known as Ashby's Ferry. In later years it took the name of Berry's Ferry. The river is now spanned with a bridge. John Ashby was as heroic a character in his day as Turner Ashby was in later years. He was engaged in the Indian and Colonial Wars, and was noted for his great courage and daring adventures. He had a son by the name of John Ashby and a nephew of the same name,—the son of his brother Robert Ashby. These two John Ashbys have been greatly confused, but from all the facts the author has been able to collect, Turner Ashby was the grandson of Capt. John Ashby II, a son of Robert Ashby and nephew of Col. John Ashby I. He resembled the first John Ashby in many of his characteristics, and no doubt was familiar with his

During the early part of the month of October, 1866, the body of Turner Ashby was disinterred in the presence of the faculty and students of the University of Virginia, and was then brought to Charlestown, where it was placed in a handsome casket donated by the women of Jefferson County. It was then brought to Winchester, where it lay in state under the guard of his old comrades until it was finally returned to mother earth in Stonewall Cemetery. The remains of Richard Ashby were brought at the same time from Romney, W. Va., where they had been buried in Indian Mound Cemetery at the time of his death, in July, 1861. The remains of Lieut.-Col. Thomas Marshall,—which had been buried at Charlestown,—and

many adventures in the Colonial Wars. Col. John Ashby was not only a great Indian fighter, but was one of the most prominent citizens in the Shenandoah Valley. He was a member of the Vestry of the first Episcopal church founded in the valley,—the Old Chapel, near Millwood. He was with Braddock in the campaign in Western Pennsylvania, in command of a company of Scouts. He was selected by Washington to convey the intelligence of Braddock's defeat to the Governor of the Colony of Virginia at Williamsburg. He was a neighbor and friend of Lord Fairfax at Greenway Court and was associated with Washington in the early defence of the valley from 1752-1754. Gen. Stephen Ashby was a brother of John Ashby I. He removed to Kentucky with his family about the close of the War of the Revolution. On his descent of the Ohio River he, his wife, and children were captured by the Indians. His children were massacred, but he and wife escaped. Stephen Ashby, it is said, subsequently devoted his life to killing Indians. He became very prominent in Western Kentucky and rose to the rank of General in the military service of that State.

those of Captain Sheetz of Front Royal, were also brought to Winchester. The bodies of these four men were carried to the Episcopal church, where they were visited by a large number of people. Many of the old comrades and friends of deceased came from their distant homes to pay homage and respect to their former leaders. The occasion was a most solemn one. Avirett says:

“Here the scene was in the highest degree solemn, and will doubtless be indelibly impressed on the minds of the participants. More worth, more gallantry, more heroism was never confined,—tears more heart-felt and sympathetic were never shed than those which bedewed the flowers with which the coffins had been profusely decorated; almost every visitor depositing a sprig, a rose, a bouquet, or some floral tribute.”

On the morning of the reinterment the town of Winchester was filled with visitors from every section of the valley and from far distant places. All parts of the South had representatives, and especially was the attendance from Maryland most creditable to the memory of the dead. Many of the old soldiers who had followed Ashby, Lee, and Jackson—survivors of that bloody



conflict, some bearing the scars of battle on their bodies,—were present, and followed the procession that carried the bodies to their last resting-place. The procession was headed by the chief marshal, Gen. T. T. Fauntleroy, with his aides. Next followed the band and members of the Masonic fraternity, followed by hearses, pallbearers, friends, and survivors of the old Ashby Brigade on foot, the procession closing with citizens on foot and in conveyances. Masonic ceremonies were conducted over the body of Turner Ashby, who had been initiated into the order during the fall of 1861, when encamped near Martinsburg. When the Masonic rites were over, the body of Richard Ashby was deposited in the same grave with his brother. Lieutenant-Colonel Marshall was buried in a grave next to the Ashby brothers. The body of Captain Sheetz was taken to his old home near Romney, as his parents desired to have it near them. After the funeral exercises were concluded the dedication of the Stonewall Cemetery took place, with most impressive exercises around the mound which held the unknown dead. After prayer and music an oration of great eloquence and power was delivered by former Gov. Henry A. Wise.

The oration delivered by Governor Wise was

full of patriotic sentiment and was a most able defense of the South. Many of his sentences have become classic. He asserted that if the cause of the South was lost by the results of the contest, it was not a true cause; if the cause was true, it was not lost. His prophetic eye saw that the principles involved in the war could only be established on a basis of Constitutional rights, and that the time would come in the history of the Nation when either the Constitution would be upheld upon the basis of its founders, or the Nation itself would be subverted.

Fifty years of government since the close of the war have brought industrial prosperity to the few at the expense of the many. This form of government has established a moneyed aristocracy which has defied the authority of the Constitution whenever it has been to its advantage to do so. The consent of the governed has been controlled by financial interests more powerful than the Government itself. It has built up a system of corporate power, which has made individual effort bend to its rule, or go down in disaster. It has flooded the financial institutions of the masses with securities that can only be held stable by their support. When this is withdrawn, disaster is signaled from every point. Values are made

to rise or fall, not by fundamental conditions of industrial activity, but by the manipulations of the moneyed power. Whenever the government attempts to regulate corporate greed and to enforce the laws against monopoly and the illegal restraint of trade, its authority is held up by waves of financial depression,—waves that sweep away values and bring about crises which threaten to paralyze all industrial operations. The money power is greater than the power of the Constitution, since it dominates the will of the people and places the control of legislation in the hands of the classes, rather than in the hands of the masses. Such is the present status of the Constitution in this country.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ASHBY (LAUREL) BRIGADE

**T**HE military life of Turner Ashby is so intimately associated with the cavalry under his command that a reference to the organization of the Ashby Cavalry is necessary in connection with this history of his life; for it is impossible to separate the man from the men who contributed so much to his distinction and added to the success of his career. Without the support of such an efficient body of subordinate officers and men it would not have been possible for him to have achieved the results he secured. He was ably and loyally supported by a military command which has few parallels in the history of the Civil War. Jackson's fame will ever be identified with the Stonewall Brigade, which made it possible for him to reach the highest military honors; for he climbed into glory by the work of his old brigade, and after he had reached the command of larger bodies of men his original command still continued to enjoy a fame that has seldom been conferred on a military organization. And just as true as it is that so long as Jackson

shall live in history the Stonewall Brigade will share his fame, so it is with the Ashby Brigade. It will always enjoy the distinction that Ashby won. It is quite true that after his death it was reorganized and commanded by able leaders, and, under Rosser, won the name of the Laurel Brigade; but it always clung to the honor that it enjoyed under Ashby, and it ever revered his memory.

It will be recalled that the nucleus of the Ashby Brigade was the Seventh Virginia Cavalry, organized in June, 1861, by Col. Angus W. McDonald, with Turner Ashby as lieutenant-colonel. After Colonel McDonald resigned, in the fall of 1861, Turner Ashby became the colonel of the regiment. At that time it numbered ten companies, but from the battle of Kernstown, March 23, 1862, to Ashby's death, the 6th of June following, the regiment was increased to the number of twenty-six companies,—thus adding sixteen companies to the regiment in about ten weeks' time. These companies had been recruited in the Valley counties and had seen no service. They were all raw men, made up of first-class material, but men inexperienced in the duties of the camp, of the march, and untried in actual combat. They came in so fast that it was

impossible to organize or discipline them as the regiment was in daily service in the field and fighting the advance of the Federals.

When Ashby was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, May 27, he was placed in command of all the cavalry in the Army of the Shenandoah, and Major Funsten was made the colonel of the Seventh Cavalry. The Second Virginia, commanded by Colonel Munford, and the Sixth Virginia, commanded by Colonel Flournoy, were added to the Ashby Brigade. This organization was a very imperfect one and necessarily an unwieldy one. Many of the companies were on detached duty in different parts of the valley, either as scouts, pickets, or guards of mountain gaps. Ashby had under his immediate control but few companies that had been trained to hard fighting, but these men did an enormous service and stood by their commander in the most loyal way. They practically made his reputation; for Ashby's fame will ever rest on the work these few men did under his inspiration. It was the ten original companies of the Seventh Virginia and Chew's battery of horse artillery that enabled him to hold the Federal advance, and that permitted Jackson to withdraw his army up the Valley. Just before his death Ashby wrote

to one of his friends, Colonel Boteler, that he had been in more than one hundred engagements and fights within a period of less than ninety days. He was practically on the firing-line morning, noon, and night,—fighting from hill to hill, and harassing the pursuing force in every conceivable way. Colonel Chew, who was with him in all these engagements, makes this statement:

“It was boasted that his successes were gained not by skilful manœuvre, but by the reckless dash and courage of himself and men; but I will do him the justice to say that he could always command more men for duty from the same muster-rolls than any cavalry commander under whom I have since served.” . . . “I have served at different times during the war with almost all the prominent cavalry leaders of Virginia, and I have never seen one who possessed the ability to inspire troops under fire with the courage and enthusiasm that Ashby’s presence always excited.” <sup>1</sup>

As Ashby did not receive his promotion of brigadier-general until May 27, and was killed on June 6, he was in command of all the Valley Cavalry only ten days. The Second and Sixth

<sup>1</sup> Avirett, p. 272.

Virginia Cavalry Regiments had been commanded by General George H. Steuart until about June 1, when General Steuart was transferred to the infantry, and these two regiments were placed under Ashby. They rendered much assistance under Ashby during the retreat up the Valley, but his chief support came from the men of the Seventh Cavalry and from Chew's Battery, who established his fame and fell heirs to his glory. No grander body of men was ever assembled in war than the original ten companies of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry. The Old Guard of Napoleon and the famous Six Hundred at Balaklava rendered no more brilliant service than did these men, who lived for days in the saddle, and fought the enemy with a daring and courage unsurpassed in the annals of war.


After Ashby's death the original ten companies of the Seventh Virginia Cavalry were placed under the command of Col. W. E. Jones, Lieutenant-Colonel Dulany, and Major Thomas Marshall.

Col. T. T. Munford, of the Second Virginia Cavalry, was placed temporarily in command of the Ashby Brigade after the death of Ashby, but was soon succeeded by Gen. George Robertson, of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry, who was sent to the valley to reorganize the cavalry. General Rob-



ertson was a graduate of West Point, and was recognized as a better organizer than fighter. With much difficulty he succeeded in getting the cavalry into a more compact organization. The original ten companies of the Seventh Cavalry were placed under the command of Col. W. E. Jones, ten other companies of the Seventh were organized into the Twelfth Virginia Cavalry, under the command of Col. A. W. Harmon; Lieutenant-Colonel Burke, and Major T. B. Massie. The remaining six companies were organized into the Seventeenth Virginia Battalion, under Major Patrick, and later five additional companies were added and the Eleventh Virginia Cavalry was formed, with Col. L. L. Lomax; Lieut.-Col. O. R. Funsten, and Major M. D. Ball in command. The Second and Sixth Virginia Cavalry were also added to the Brigade, but the Second Virginia was later transferred to eastern Virginia.

The Ashby Brigade, as thus organized under General Robertson, continued to operate in the Valley until after the defeat of McClellan on the Peninsula. It then joined the cavalry under Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, and operated with the army in the second battle of Manassas and in the Maryland campaign, rendering distinguished service at Crampton's Cap and in the capture of Harper's



Ferry. After the battle of Antietam, in September, 1862, General Robertson was transferred to the South, and Col. W. E. Jones was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general and placed in command of the brigade. Col. R. H. Dulany became the colonel of the Seventh, and Major Thomas Marshall was made lieutenant-colonel. Under these officers the command performed valuable service and maintained the honorable distinction it had won under Ashby, continuing to be known as the Ashby Cavalry.

In August, 1863, General Jones was removed on account of some alleged disrespect he had shown General Stuart, who had command of all the cavalry in Virginia, whereupon General Rosser was placed in command of the brigade and greatly improved its efficiency by his bold and daring exploits. Rosser was a young officer of great courage, enterprise, and activity. He led the brigade on several raids, which created great sensation at the time, and in which he exhibited unusual daring. He took great pride in the brigade, and named it the Laurel Brigade, which distinguishing title it held until the close of the war. Its operations were largely confined to the Valley, but the brigade was with General Stuart in the campaign of 1864 in eastern Virginia. General

Rosser was wounded in the fight at Trevillians, and the command devolved on Colonel Dulany. When Colonel Dulany was wounded at Woodstock, Colonel Funsten took command until General Dearing was placed in command. General Dearing was mortally wounded on the retreat from Richmond, near High Bridge, when Col. E. V. White took command until the surrender. The brigade did not surrender at Appomattox Court House with General Lee, but cut its way out and retired to Lynchburg, where it disbanded. During the four years of war it had rendered distinguished service to the Southern cause; it had suffered heavy losses by death, but it came out of the contest with honor and distinction, which will live as long as the history of the Civil War is perpetuated.

When the men returned to their homes they began the upbuilding of their fortunes, and have since been useful citizens to their State and to the Nation. Those that now survive look back with honorable pride on their record of service, and still cherish the memory of Ashby and other commanders who led them in their brilliant career.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ASHBY'S INFLUENCE ON THE POETRY OF THE SOUTH

A HISTORY of the life of Turner Ashby would be incomplete without a reference to the influence of his character upon the romance and poetry of the South of his period. With the exception of Lee and Jackson, there are few of the great leaders of the Civil War on either side who have called forth such a wealth of romance, poetry, and song as did Ashby. The spirit of chivalry and heroism that he exhibited, his short but brilliant career, his hold upon the affections of his men and of the people of Virginia,—all gave a theme for the outpouring of patriotic sentiment in literary form. The author has selected a few of the more beautiful of these poems for introduction into this work.

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LINES

IN MEMORY OF GENERAL TURNER ASHBY

*By Dr. R. C. Ambler, of Fauquier County, Va.*

The mane upon thy charger's crest,  
The raven beard upon thy breast  
No more shall mingle lock with lock,  
Like streamers, in the battle shock.  
Thy valiant hand no more shall feel  
Within its grasp the gleaming steel;  
And ne'er again the battle-cry  
Shall nerve thine arm nor light thine eye;  
Nor dashing charge, nor contest brave  
Arouse thee from thine honored grave.  
But while thy native mountains loom,  
In misty blue about thy home,  
Shall Ashby's fame, in battle won,  
Descend in pride from sire to son.  
Valiant, kindly, knightly, pure,  
Lustrous as the steel he wore,  
Shall woman's lips delight to tell  
The name of him who nobly fell,  
And left on earth no other stains,  
But those that dropped from bleeding veins.  
In after years some shaft may rise  
To mark the spot where Ashby lies;  
But Ashby's name now wakes a thrill  
That bronze or marble never will.

DIRGE FOR ASHBY

*By Mrs. Margaret J. Preston, of Lexington, Va.*

Heard ye that thrilling word,—

Accent of dread

Fall like a thunderbolt,

Bowing each head?

Over the battle dun—

Over each booming gun:

*Ashby, our bravest one!*

*Ashby is dead!*

Saw ye the veterans—

Hearts that had known

Never a quail of fear,

Never a groan—

Sob 'mid the fight they win,

Tears their stern eyes within?

*Ashby, our paladin!*

*Ashby is dead!*

Dash, dash, the tear away!

Crush down the pain,

*Dulcus et decus* be

Fittest refrain.

Why should the dreary pall

Round him be flung at all?

Did not our hero fall

Gallantly slain?

Catch the last words of cheer  
Dropped from his tongue!  
Over the valley's din  
Let them be rung!  
"Follow me! follow me!"  
Soldier, oh, could there be  
Pæan or dirge for thee  
Loftier sung?

Bold as the Lion-Heart,—  
Dauntless and brave,  
Knightly as knightliest  
Bayard could crave;  
Sweet,—with all Sidney's grace,—  
Tender as Hampden's face;  
Who, who shall fill the space  
Void by his grave?

'Tis not one broken heart,  
Wild with dismay,—  
Crazed in her agony,—  
Weeps o'er his clay!  
Ah! from a thousand eyes  
Flow the pure tears that rise.  
Widowed Virginia lies  
Stricken to-day!

Yet charge as gallantly,  
 Ye whom he led!  
 Jackson, the victor, still  
 Stands at your head!  
 Heroes, be battle done  
 Bravelier, every one  
 Nerved by the thought alone:  
*Ashby is dead!*

# ASHBY

*By John R. Thompson*<sup>1</sup>

To the brave all homage render,  
 Weep, ye skies of June!  
 With a radiance pure and tender,  
 Shine, O saddened moon!  
 Dead upon the field of glory,  
 Hero fit for song or story,  
 Lies our bold dragoon.

Well they learned, whose hands have slain him.  
 Braver, knightlier foe  
 Never fought with Moor or Paynim,  
 Rode at Templestowe;

<sup>1</sup> John R. Thompson, born in Richmond, October 23, 1823, was the editor and proprietor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He also edited a paper in London in the interest of the Confederacy. At the time of his death, April 30, 1873, he was literary reviewer on the *New York Evening Post*.



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With a mien how high and joyous,  
'Gainst the hordes that would destroy us  
    Went he forth, we know.  
Nevermore, alas! shall saber  
    Gleam around the crest;  
Fought his fight, fulfilled his labor;  
    Stilled his manly breast.  
All unheard sweet nature's cadence,  
Trump of fame and voice of maidens;  
    Now he takes his rest.

Earth, that all too soon hath bound him,  
    Gently wrap his clay,  
Linger lovingly around him,  
    Light of dying day,  
Softly fall the summer showers,  
Birds and bees among the flowers  
    Make the gloom seem gay.

There, throughout the coming ages,—  
    When his sword is rust  
And his deeds in classic pages,—  
    Mindful of his trust,  
Shall Virginia, bending lowly,  
Still a ceaseless vigil holy  
    Keep above his dust.

A POEM.

*By Dr. Frank Ticknor, of Columbus, Ga.*

The knightliest of the knightly race,  
 Who since the days of old,  
 Have kept the lamp of chivalry  
 Alight in hearts of gold;  
 The kindest of the kindly band,  
 Who, rarely hating ease,  
 Yet rode with Spotswood round the land,  
 And Raleigh round the seas.

Who climbed the blue Virginia hills,  
 Against embattled foes,  
 And planted there, in valleys fair,  
 The lily and the rose;  
 Whose fragrance lives in many lands,  
 Whose beauty stars the earth,  
 And lights the hearts of many homes  
 With loveliness and worth.

We thought they slept—the sons who kept  
 The names of noble sires,  
 And slumbered while the darkness crept  
 Around the vigil fires.  
 But still the Golden Horseshoe knights  
 Their Old Dominion keep,  
 Whose foes have found enchanted ground,  
 But not a knight asleep.







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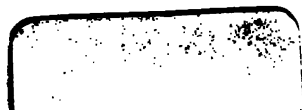
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